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The Wisdom of the East Series

EDITED BY

L. CRANMER-BYNG

Dr. S. A. KAPADIA

# THE SPIRIT OF JAPANESE ART

WISDOM OF THE EAST

# THE SPIRIT OF JAPANESE ART

BY YONE NOGUCHI

AUTHOR OF "THE SPIRIT OF JAPANESE POETRY"

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

1915

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TO

EDWARD F. STRANGE

OF THE SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

## EDITORIAL NOTE

THE object of the Editors of this series is a very definite one. They desire above all things that, in their humble way, these books shall be the ambassadors of good-will and understanding between East and West—the old world of Thought and the new of Action. In this endeavour, and in their own sphere, they are but followers of the highest example in the land. They are confident that a deeper knowledge of the great ideals and lofty philosophy of Oriental thought may help to a revival of that true spirit of Charity which neither despises nor fears the nations of another creed and colour.

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# INTRODUCTION

In the Ashikaga age (1335–1573) the best Japanese artists, like Sesshu and his disciples, for instance, true revolutionists in art, not mere rebels, whose Japanese simplicity was strengthened and clarified by Chinese suggestion, were in the truest meaning of the word Buddhist priests, who sat before the inextinguishable lamp of faith, and sought their salvation by the road of silence; their studios were in the Buddhist temple, east of the forests and west of the hills, dark without, and luminous within with the symbols of all beauty of nature and heaven. And their artistic work was a sort of prayer-making, to satisfy their own imagination, not a thing to show to a critic whose attempt at arguing and denying is only a nuisance in the world of higher art; they drew pictures to create absolute beauty and grandeur, that made their own human world look almost trifling, and directly joined themselves with eternity. Art for them was not a question of mere reality in expression, but the question of Faith. Therefore they never troubled their minds with the matter of subjects or the size of the canvas; indeed, the

mere reality of the external world had ceased to be a standard for them, who lived in the temple studios. Laurance Binyon said of them : " Hints of the divine were to be found everywhere—in leaves of grass, in the life of animals, birds, and insects. No occupation was too humble or menial to be invested with beauty and significance." Through them the Ashikaga period becomes very important in our Japanese art annals. Binyon says : " The Ashikaga period stands in art for an ideal of reticent simplicity. A revulsion from the ornate conventions, which had begun to paralyse the pristine vigour of the Yamato school, and fresh acquaintance with the masterpieces of the Sung era, brought about by renewed contact with China, after a hermit period of exclusion, created a passion for swift, impassioned or suggestive painting in ink, on silvery-toned paper."

People, like myself, who are more delighted at the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square with, for instance, " A Summer Afternoon after a Shower," or a " View at Epsom," by Constable, and with " Walton Reach," or " Windsor from Lower Hope," by Turner, than with their other bigger things, will be certainly pleased to see " Temple and Hill above a Lake," by Sesshu, or " Travellers at a Temple Gate," by Sesson, representing this interesting Ashikaga period, exhibited in the new wing of the British Museum. You have to go there and spend an hour or so with the

Arthur Morrison collection of Japanese art, if you wish to feel the real old Japanese humanity and love that our ancient masters inspired into their work. To be sure, none of the things exhibited there, small or large, good or poor, are so-called exhibition pictures, which are often a game of artistic charlatans. In real Japanese art you should not look for variety of subjects; but when you find an astonishing richness of execution, certainly it is the time when your eyes begin to open toward another sort of asceticism in art. How glad I am that our Japanese art, at least in the olden time, never degenerated into a mechanical art!

What a pity Sesson's "Travellers at a Temple Gate," this remarkable little thing, has been mended in two or three spots. If you wish to see the real power and distinction of great Sesshu, you might compare his "Daruma" in the exhibition with the other "Daruma" pictures by Soami and Takuchu also in the exhibition: the point I should like to bring out is that Sesshu's "Daruma" is an artistic attempt to proclaim the spiritual intensity which shines within from the true strength of consciousness and real economy of force, while the others are rather a superficial demonstration.

There is no other Japanese school so interesting, even from the one point of style in expressive decoration, as the Koyetsu-korin school,

the much-admired branch of Japanese art in the West. Although I was glad to see a good specimen of Sotatsu in "Descent of the Thunder God on the Palace of Fujiwara" in the exhibition, I hardly think that such a figure painting (a really good work in its own way) shows Sotatsu's best art; while my memory of the Sotatsu exhibition at Uyeno of Tokyo a few years ago is still fresh, I am pleased to connect Sotatsu with the flower-screens and little *Kakemono* for the tea-rooms, now with a pair of rabbits nibbling grasses, then with a little bunch of wild chrysanthemums. You will see what an admirer I am of this school, since I have dwelt at some length on Koyetsu and Kenzan in this little book of Japanese art. I regret that I have to beg for some more time before I make myself able to write on great Korin; I am sure that Hoitsu, one of the most distinguished decadents of the early nineteenth century, and the acknowledged successor of the Koyetsu-korin school, would give us a highly interesting subject to discuss. Oh, those days at Bunkwa and Bunsei (1804–1830)! Dear, rotten, foolish, romantic old Tokugawa civilisation and art!

Two articles on Harunobu and Hokusai are still to be written for the Ukiyoye school; I know, I believe, that without those two artists the school would never be complete. I am happy to think that I have Gaho Hashimoto in the

present book as the last great master of the Kano school; but I cannot help thinking about Hogai Kano, Gaho's spiritual brother, who passed away almost in starvation.

Indeed, Hogai's whole life of sixty years was a life of hardship and hunger; when he reached manhood, the whole country of Japan began to be disturbed under the name of the Grand Restoration. In those days, the safety of one's life was not assured; how then could art claim the general protection? All the artists threw away their drawing-brushes. Hogai tried to get his living by selling baskets and brooms; his wife, it is said, helped him by weaving at night; their lives were hard almost without comparison. Following the advice of a certain Mr. Fujishima, Hogai drew pictures and gave them to a dealer at Hikage Cho, Tokyo, to be sold. After three long years, he found that only one picture had been sold, and so he gave the rest of them, more than fifty, to Mr. Fujishima, who, by turns, gave them away to his friends. And those pictures which were given freely by Mr. Fujishima are now their owners' greatest treasures. Thus is the irony of life exemplified. It was thought by Hogai a piece of good fortune when he was engaged by Professor Fenellosa for twelve yen a month; this American critic's eye discerned Hogai's unusual ability. It is almost unbelievable to-day that such a small sum should have been acceptable;

but it may have been the usual payment in those days, and the Professor's friendship was more to Hogai than money. He received fifteen yen afterward when he was engaged by the Educational Department of the Government in 1884; how sad he could not support himself by art alone. And alas, he was no more when the general appreciation of his great art began to be told. Quite many specimens of Hogai's work are treasured in the Boston Museum at present. How changed are the conditions now from Hogai's day! But are these fortunately changed conditions really helpful for the creation of true art?

To look at some of the modern work is too trying, mainly from the fact that it lacks, to use the word of Zen Buddhism, the meaning of silence; it seems to me that some modern artists work only to tax people's minds. In Nature we find peacefulness and silence; we derive from it a feeling of comfort and restfulness; and again from it we receive vigour and life. I think so great art should be. Many modern artists cannot place themselves in unison with their art; in one word, they do not know how to follow the law or *michi*, that Mother Nature gladly evolves. It is such a delight to examine the works of Hogai, as each picture is a very part of his own true self; the only difference is the difference that he wished to evoke in interest; his desire was always so clear in the relation be-

tween himself and his work, and accidentally he succeeded as if by magic in establishing the same relationship for us, the onlookers. It goes without saying that the pictures of such an artist are richer than they appear; while he used only Chinese ink in his pictures, our imagination is pleased to see them with the addition of colour, and even voice.

The subjects which are treated in the present volume are various, but I dare say that all the artists whose art I have treated here will well agree in the point of their expression of the Japanese spirit of art, which always aims at poetry and atmosphere, but not mere style and purpose.

Y. N.

LONDON,
*May* 13, 1914.

# THE SPIRIT OF JAPANESE ART

## I

## KOYETSU

WHEN I left home toward a certain Doctor's who had promised to show me his collection of chirography and art, the unusual summer wind which had raged since midnight did not seem to calm down; the rain-laden clouds now gathered, and then parted for the torrent of sunlight to dash down. I was most cordially received by him, as I was expected; in coming under threat of the weather I had my own reasons. I always thought that summer was worse than spring for examining (more difficult to approve than deny) the objects of art, on account of our inability for concentrating our minds; the heat that calls all the *shoji* doors to open wide confuses the hearts of bronze Buddhas or Sesshu's "Daruma" or Kobo's chirography or whatever they be, whichever way they have to turn, in the rush

of light from every side; I thanked the bad weather to-day which, I am sure, I should have cursed some other day. The Doctor's house had an almost winter-sad aspect with the *shoji*, even the rain-doors all shut, the soft darkness assembling at the very place it should, where the saints or goddesses revealed themselves; hanging after hanging was unrolled and rolled before me in quick succession. "Doctor, tell me quick whose writing is that?" I loudly shouted when I came to one little bit of Japanese writing. "That is Koyetsu's," he replied. "Why, is it? It seems it is worth more than all the others put together; Doctor, I will not ask you for any more hangings to-day," I said. And a moment later, I looked at him and exclaimed in my determined voice:

"What will you say if I take it away and keep it indefinitely?"

"I say nothing at all, but am pleased to see how you will enjoy it," the Doctor replied.

The evening had already passed when I returned home with that hanging of Koyetsu's chirography under my arm. "Put all the gaslights out! Do you hear me? All the gaslights out! And light all the candles you have!" I cried. The little hanging was properly hanged at the "tokonoma" when the candles were lighted, whose world-old soft flame (wasn't it singing the old song of world-wearied heart?)

allured my mind back, perhaps, to Koyetsu's age of four hundred years ago—to imagine myself to be a waif of greyness like a famous tea-master, Rikiu or Enshu or, again, Koyetsu, burying me in a little Abode of Fancy with a boiling tea-kettle; through that smoke of candles hurrying like our ephemeral lives, the characters of Koyetsu's writing loomed with the haunting charm of a ghost. They say:

"Where's cherry-blossom?
The trace of the garden's spring breeze is seen no more.
I will point, if I am asked,
To my fancy snow upon the ground."

"What a yearning of poetical soul!" I exclaimed. It is your imagination to make rise out of fall, day out of darkness, and Life out of Death; not to see the fact of scattering petals is your virtue, and to create your own special sensation with the impulse of art is your poet's dignity; what a blessing if you can tell a lie to yourself; better still, not to draw a distinct line between the things our plebeian minds call truth and untruth, and live like a wreath shell with the cover shut in the air of your own creation. Praised be the touch of your newly awakened soul which can turn the fallen petals to the beauty of snow; there is nothing that will deny the yearning of your poetic soul. It is not superstition to say that the poet's life is worthier than any other life. Some time ago the word loneliness impressed

me as almost divine as Rikiu pledged himself in it; I wished, through its invocation, to create a picture, as the ancient ditty has it, of a "lone cottage standing by the autumn wave, under the fading light of eve." But I am thankful for Koyetsu to-day. How to reach my own poetry seems clearly defined in my thought; it will be by the twilight road of imagination born out of reality and the senses—the road of idealism baptised by the pain of death.

What remains of Koyetsu's life is slight, as his day was not feminine and prosaic, like to-day, with love of gossip and biography-writing; he, with the friends of his day, Sambiakuin Konoye, Shokado, both of them eminent chirographers of all time of Japan, Jozan the scholar, Enshu the tea-master, and many others, realised the age of artistic heroism which is often weakened by the vulgarity of thought that aims at the Future and Fame. The utter rejection of them would be the prayer itself to strengthen the appreciation of art into a living thing. Koyetsu made his profession in his younger days the connoisseurship of swords as well as their whetting; it was for that service, I believe, that Iyeyasu, the great feudal Prince of Yedo, gave him a piece of land, then a mere waste, at Taka ga Mine of the lonely suburb of Kyoto, by the Tanba highway, where he retired, with a few writing brushes and a tea-kettle, to build his Taikyo An, or Abode of

Vacancy, giving his æsthetic fancy full swing to fill the "vacancy" of abode and life. He warned his son and family, when he bade them farewell, it is said, that they should never step into Yedo of the powerful lords and princes, because the worldly desire was not the way of ennobling a life which was worth living. We might call it "seihin," or proud poverty that Koyetsu most prized, as it never allures one from the chasteness of simplicity which is the real foundation of art. There is reason to believe that he must have been quite a collector of works of art, rich and rare, in his earlier life; but it is said that he most freely gave them away when he left his city home for his lonely retirement; indeed he was entering into the sanctuary of priests. What needed he there but prayer and silence? There is nothing more petty, even vulgar, in the grey world of art and poetry, than to have a too close attachment to life and physical luxuries; if our Orientalism may not tell you anything much, I think it will teach you at least to soar out of your trivialism.

Koyetsu's must have been a remarkable personality, remarkable because of its lucidity distilled and crystallised—to use a plebeian expression, by his own philosophy, whose touch breathed on the spot a real art into anything from a porcelain bowl to the design on a lacquer box; I see his transcendental mien like a cloud (that

cloud is not necessarily high in the sky all the time) in his works that remain to-day, more from the reason that they carry, all of them, the solitary grace of amateurishness in the highest sense. To return to the unprofessional independence itself was his great triumph; his artistic fervour was from his priesthood. I know that he was a master in porcelain-making, picture-drawing, and also in lacquer-box designing (what a beautiful work of art is the writing box of raised lacquer called Sano Funahashi, to-day owned by the Imperial Museum of Tokyo); but it seems that he often betrayed that his first and last love was in his calligraphy. Once he was asked by Sambiakuin Konoye, a high nobleman of the Kyoto Court, the question who was the best penman of the day; it is said he replied, after a slight hesitation: "Well, then, the second best would be you, my Lord; and Shokado would be the third best." The somewhat disappointed calligraphist of high rank in the court pressed Koyetsu: "Speak out, who is the first! There is nothing of 'Well, then,' about it." Koyetsu replied: "This humble self is that first." The remarkable part is that in his calligraphy Koyetsu never showed any streak of worldly vulgarity. Its illusive charm is that of a rivulet sliding through the autumnal flowers; when we call it impressive, that impressiveness is that of the sudden fall of the moon. To return to this

hanging of his (thousand thanks to the Doctor) to which I look up to-day as a servant to his master, with all devotion. The sure proof of its being no mean art, I venture to say, is seen in its impressing me as the singular work of accident, like the blow of the wind or the sigh of the rain; it seems the writer (great Koyetsu) was never conscious, when he wrote it, of the paper on which he wrote, of the bamboo brush which he grasped. It is true that we cannot play our criticism against it; it is not our concern to ask how it was written, but only to look at and admire it. The characters are in the style called "gyosho," or current hand, to distinguish from the "kaisho," or square hand; and there is one more style under the name of "sosho," or grass hand, that is an abbreviated cursive hand. As this was written in "gyo" style, it did not depend on elaborate patience but on the first stroke of fancy. I have no hesitation to say that, when it is said that the arts of the calligrapher and the painter are closely allied, the art of the calligrapher would be by just so much related with our art of living; the question is what course among the three styles we shall choose—the square formalism of "kaisho" or the "sosho"-like romanticism? It does no justice to call "gyosho" a middle road; when you know that your idealism is always born from the conventionalism of reality of "kaisho"-

like materialism, it is not wrong to say that Koyetsu wisely selected a line of "gyosho"-like accentuation—not so fantastic as a "sosho" calligraph—with the tea-kettle and a few writing brushes, to make one best day before he fell into the final rest.

## II

## KENZAN

I USED to pass by Zenyoji, a little Buddhist temple by the eastern side of Uyeno Hill (whose trees, almost a thousand years old, in the shape of a dragon, perhaps created by a Kano artist, have been ruined by the smoke that never departs from the railroad terminus), where I knew, from the calligraphic sign carved on a stone by the temple gate, that Kenzan Ogata, the famous artist on paper or porcelain, and younger brother of the great Korin, was buried in the graveyard within; but if I did not step in, as in fact I did not step in, although I passed by countless times, as I lived then in the neighbourhood of the temple in classical Negishi—classical in association with the nightingale and that wonderful pine-tree called Ogyo no Matsu (here also lived Hoitsu, the famous decadent of the early nineteenth century)—that was because I had little interest in any grave, even in Kenzan's. And the temple looked so dusty, smoky, and altogether dirty. How sorry I felt in thinking that Kenzan's artistic soul must be suffering from the

snoring, growling, and hissing of the engines day and night. Alas, he could not foresee the future of a few hundred years when he died. But I welcomed the news when the sudden removal of the grave was reported as a result, a fortunate result indeed, of the expansion of the railway track; this time, to be sure, I thought, his grey-loving, solitary soul would be pleased to find a far better sleeping-place, as he was to be moved to the large old garden of the Kokka Club (a well-known artist club), with a deep pond where many gold fish peep underneath the umbrella-like lotus leaves in early summer, and in later autumn the *hagi* or two-coloured lespedozas (Kenzan's beloved subject) would lean upon the water to admire their own images; and it is a matter thrice satisfactory to think that this new place is also in Negishi (which somehow recalls Hampstead, though there is no natural resemblance between them).

I was invited to attend the memorial exhibition of Kenzan's work to commemorate the removal of his grave the other day. With the greatest anticipation I went there with two friends of mine, a fellow poet and an artist, both of them great admirers of Kenzan Ogata. When we entered the ground, we found at once that the Buddhist ceremony, that is the Sutra-reading called Kuya Nembutsu, around the newly dug

grave by the lotus pond under the trees, was well started already; some ten or eleven priests, in fact the devoted members of the club, but in long black robes, were seen through the foliage from the distance, hopping around like the vagarious spirits of a moment (this fantastic ceremony, Kuya Nembutsu) while reciting the holy book; the voice of the recitation most musically broke the silence. We did not approach the grave, but went straight into the exhibition rooms, because we knew that the best prayer we could offer to Kenzan was to see and rightly appreciate his works of art. We all of us were unable to speak a word at the beginning, as our tongues (our heads too) lost their powers against his peculiarly distinguished art, which is the oldest and again the newest. When our minds became better composed, we sat in a corner of the room where the hangings of his flowers or trees, and the tea-bowls or incense-cases with his favourite designs, had been well arranged; we felt inclined to talk, even discuss his art.

"What a pleasing egotism," I ventured to say, "in that picture of lilies or this picture of fishes; the lilies and fishes are not an accessory as in many other Japanese pictures, but the lilies and fishes themselves in their full meaning. Again what a delightful egotism!"

"You might call flowers feminine," my artist-friend interrupted me. "But I should like to

know where is a thing more truly egotistic than the flowers."

"That egotism in the picture," I proceeded, "might be a real result from the great reverence and intense love of Kenzan for his subjects; we can see that his mind, when he painted them, was never troubled with any other thing or thought. You know that such only occurs to a truly gifted artist. After all, the greatness of Kenzan is his sincerity. And it goes without saying that the pictures on tea-bowls we see here are not things which were made to some one's order. We become at once sincere and silent in their presence; to say that his art was spiritual is another way to express it—by that I mean that we are given all opportunities to imagine what the pictures themselves may not contain. Our imagination grows deeper and clearer through the virtue or magic of his work; and again his work appears thrice simplified and therefore more vital. The art really simple and vital is never to be troubled with any rhetoric or accessories of unessentials; before you make such a picture, you must have, to begin with, your own soul simplified and vital in the true sense. Kenzan had that indeed."

"To call Kenzan's work merely beautiful," my friend-poet said, evidently in the same mind with myself, "whether it be the picture on paper or China-bowls, does no justice; what he truly aimed at was the artistic expression,—and he was

most successful when he was most true. To him, as with the other great artists of East or West, the beauties only occurred—and Kenzan's beauties occurred when his simple art was most decorative; in his decorativeness he found his own artistic emotion. It was his greatness that he made a perfect union of emotion and intellect in his work; to say shortly, he was the expression of personality."

"What a personality was Kenzan's! Again what a personality!" I exclaimed. I proceeded, as I wished to take up the talk where my friend poet had left off, "It is his personality by whose virtue even a little weed or insignificant spray of a willow-tree turns to a real art; he had that personality, because he had such a love and sympathy. Indeed the main question of the artist is in his love and sympathy; the external technique is altogether secondary. When you commune with the inner meaning, that is the beginning and also the ending. We see here the picture of a cherry-tree covered by the red blossoms, which might happen to be criticised as a bad drawing; but since it does appear as nothing but a cherry-tree, proud and lovely, I think that Kenzan's artistic desire was fully answered. He was an artist, not merely either an illustrator or a designer. He was a true artist, therefore his work is ever so new like the moon and flowers; and again old, like the flowers and moon."

"If the so-called post-impressionists could see Kenzan's work!" my friend-artist suddenly ventured to exclaim, "I am sure that Vincent Van Gogh would be glad to have this six-leafed screen of poppy-flowers."

"Really the picture is the soul of the flowers," I said, "but not the external flowers. It is mystic as the flowers are mystic. And imagine Kenzan's attitude when he drew that screen! I believe that he had the same reverence as when he stood in the religion of mysticism to paint a goddess; indeed his work was prayer and soul's consolation. Though the subject was flowers, I have no hesitation to call the picture religious. I almost feel like lighting a candle and burning incense before this screen of poppies."

As with other gifted artists, we see Kenzan's real life behind his work. Some critic ably said that true art was an episode of life; I can imagine that, when his artistic fancy moved and his work was done, he must have thrown it aside into the waves of time, offhand, most unceremoniously, and forgotten all about it. We can truly say of his works that they never owed one thing to money or payment for their existence—and that is the greatest praise we can give to any work of art. His material life might be said to have been quite fortunate in that he was invited to Yedo (present Tokyo) by the Prince of the Kanyeiji Temple of Uyeno, under whose patronage his

art was pleased to take its own free independent course; but his greatness is that when the Prince passed away and he was left to poverty, he never trembled and shrank under its cold cruel baptism; indeed that baptism made his personality far nobler, like the white flame from which the whiteness is taken out, and consequently his art was a thing created, as we say here, by the mind out of the world and dust. The works which to-day remain and are admired by us are mostly the work he executed after he reached his seventieth year. We have many reasons to be thankful for the fact that he left Kyoto, the old city of court nobles and ladies, somewhat effeminate, and the side of his brother Korin, whose great influence would have certainly made him a little Korin at the best; we see no distinction whatever in the work which he gave the world under Korin's guidance. His art made a great stride after he appeared in the Yedo of the warriors and manliness and touched a different atmosphere from that of his former life; I will point, when you ask me for the proof, to the now-famous six-fold screen with the picture of plum-blossom, or the hanging also of the plum-blossom owned by the Imperial Museum. Oh, what a noble plum-blossom, which reminds us of a samurai's heart, simple and brave!

## III

## UTAMARO

I FEEL I scent, in facing Utamaro's ladies, whether with no soul or myriad souls (certainly ladies, be they courtesans or *geishas*, who never bartered their own beauty and songs away), the rich-soft passionate odour of rare old roses; when I say I hear the silken-delicate summer breezes winging in the picture, I mean that the Japanese sensuousness (is it the scent or pang of a lilac or thorn?) makes my senses shiver at the last moment when it finally turns to spirituality. It was our Japanese civilisation of soul, at least in olden time under Tokugawa's regime, not to distinguish between sensuousness and spirituality, or to see at once the spiritual in the sensuous; I once wrote down as follows, upon the woman drawn by lines, or, more true to say, by the absence of lines, in snake-like litheness of attitude, I might say more subtle than Rossetti's Lillith, with such eyes only opened to see love:

"Too common to say she is the beauty of line,
However, the line old, spiritualised into odour,

(The odour soared into an everlasting ghost from life and death),
As a gossamer, the handiwork of a dream,
'Tis left free as it flaps:
The lady of Utamaro's art is the beauty of zephyr flow.
I say again, the line with the breath of love,
Enwrapping my heart to be a happy prey:
Sensuous? To some so she may appear,
But her sensuousness divinised into the word of love."

Although I can enjoy and even criticise Hiroshige or Hokusai at any time and in any place, let me tell you that I cannot do so with Utamaro, because I must be first in the rightest mood (who says bodies have no mood?) as when I see the living woman; to properly appreciate his work of art I must have the fullness of my physical strength so that my criticism is disarmed. (Criticism? Why, that is the art for people imperfect in health, thin and tired.) I feel, let me confess, almost physical pain—is it rather a joy?—through all my adoration in seeing Utamaro's women, just as when with the most beautiful women whose beauty first wounds us; I do not think it vulgarity to say that I feel blushing with them, because the true spiritualism would please to be parenthesised by bodily emphasis. It is your admiration that makes you bold; again your admiration of Utamaro's pictures that makes them a real part of yourself, therefore your vital question of body and soul; and you shall never be able to think of them

separately from your personal love. When I say that we have our own life and art in his work, I mean that all Japanese woman-beauty, love, passion, sorrow and joy, in one word, all dreams now appear, then disappear, by the most wonderful lines of his art.

I will lay me down whenever I want to beautifully admire Utamaro and spend half an hour with his lady ("To-day I am with her in silence of twilight eve, and am afraid she may vanish into the mist"), in the room darkened by the candle-light (it is the candle-light that darkens rather than lights); every book or picture of Western origin (perhaps except a few reprints from Rossetti or Whistler, which would not break the atmosphere altogether) should be put aside. How can you place together in the same room Utamaro's women, for instance, with Millet's pictures or Carpenter's "Towards Democracy"? The atmosphere I want to create should be most impersonal, not touched or scarred by the sharpness of modern individualism or personality, but eternally soft and grey; under the soft grey atmosphere you would expect to see the sudden swift emotion of love, pain, or joy of life, that may come any moment or may not come at all. I always think that the impersonality or the personality born out of the depth of impersonality was regarded in older Japan as the highest, most virtuous art and life; now not talking about

life, but the art—Utamaro's art, the chronicle or history of the idealised harem or divan. How charming to talk with Utamaro on love and beauty in the grey soft atmosphere particularly fitting to receive him in, or to be received by him in. I would surely venture to say to him on such a rare occasion: "You had no academy or any hall of mediocrity in your own days to send your pictures to; that was fortunate, as you appealed directly to the people eventually more artistic and always just. I know that you too were once imprisoned under the accusation of obscenity; there was the criticism also in your day which saw the moral and the lesson, but not the beauty and the picture. When you say how sorry you were to part with your picture when it was done, I fully understand your artistic heart, because the picture was too much of yourself; perhaps you confessed your own love and passion too nakedly. I know that you must have been feeling uneasy or even afraid to be observed or criticised too closely."

As a certain critic remarked, the real beauty flies away like an angel whenever an intellect rushes in and begins to speak itself; the intellect, if it has anything to do, certainly likes to show up itself too much, with no consideration for the general harmony that would soon be wounded by it. Utamaro's art, let me dare say, is as I once wrote:

" She is an art (let me call her so)
Hung, as a web, in the air of perfume,
Soft yet vivid, she sways in music :
(But what sadness in her saturation of life !)
Her music lives in intensity of a moment and then dies ;
To her, suggestion is her life.
She is the moth-light playing on reality's dusk,
Soon to die as a savage prey of the moment ;
She is a creation of surprise (let me say so),
Dancing gold on the wire of impulse."

Some one might say that Utamaro's ladies are brainless, but is it not, as I said before, that the sacrifice of individuality or personality makes them join at once with the great ghosts of universal beauty and love ? They are beautiful, because all the ghosts and spirits of all the ages and humanity of Japan speak themselves through them ; it is perfectly right of him not to give any particular name to the pictures, because they are not the reflection of only one woman, but of a hundred and thousand women ; besides, Utamaro must have been loving a little secrecy and mystification to play with the public's curiosity.

We have his art ; that is quite enough. What do I care about his life, what he used to wear and eat, how long he slept and how many hours he worked every day ; in fact, what is known as his life is extremely slight. It is said that he was a sort of hanger-on to Juzaburo Tsutaya, the well-known publisher of his day, at the house within a stone's throw of Daimon or Great Gate of Yoshiwara, the Nightless City of hired beauties

and lanterns, where, the story says, Utamaro had his nightly revel of youthful days as a fatal slave to female enchantment; while we do not know whether he revelled there or not, we know that as Yoshiwara of those times was the rendezvous of beauty, good looks, and song, not all physical, but quite spiritual, we can believe that he must have wandered there for his artistic development. Indeed there was his great art beautifully achieved when he suddenly entered into idealism or dream where sensuousness and spirituality find themselves to be blood brothers or sisters. In the long history of Japanese art we see the most interesting turn in the appearance of a new personality, that is the Ukiyoye woman; and who was the artist who perfected them to the art of arts? He was Utamaro. You may abuse and criticise, if you will, their unnaturally narrow squint eyes and egg-shaped smooth face; but from the mask his woman wears I am deliciously impressed with the strange yet familiar, old but new, artistic personality. The times change, and we are becoming more intellectual, as a consequence, physically ugly; is it too sweeping or one-sided to say that? I have, however, many reasons for my wishing to see more influence of Utamaro's art.

## IV

## HIROSHIGE

THE Sumida River's blue began to calm down, like that of an old Japanese colour-print, into the blue, I should say, of silence which had not been mixed with another colour to make life; that blue, it might be said, did not exist so much in the river as in my very mind, which has lately grown, following a certain Mr. Hopper, to cry, "Hiro—Hiro—Hiroshige the Great!" The time was late afternoon of one day in last April; the little boat which carried a few souls like mine, who, greatly troubled by the modern life, were eager to gain the true sense of perspective towards Nature, glided down as it finished the regular course of the "Cherry-blossom viewing at Mukojima." And my mind entered slowly into a picture of my own creation—nay, Hiroshige's. "Look at the view from here. (I was thinking of Hiroshige's Sumidagawa Hanasakari among his Yedo pictures.) It may be too late now to agree with Wilde when he said that Nature imitates Art," I said to my friend. He saw at once my meaning, though not clearly, and ex-

panded on how artistically the human mind has been advancing lately; and I endorsed him with the fact that I have come to see, for some long time, the Japanese scenery through Hiroshige's eye. My friend exclaimed: "Is it not the same thing, when you think Nature imitates Art, that your mind itself imitates the Art first?" It is not written in any book how much Hiroshige was appreciated in his day; but I believe I am not wrong to say that he is now reaching the height of popularity in both the East and the West, of popularity in the real sense, and you will easily understand me when I say that he is the artist of the future in the same sense that I disbelieve in the birth register of Turner and Whistler. He is, in truth, greatly in advance, even if I fancy he is an artist of the present day, your contemporary and mine; I always go to him to find where Nature is pleased to put her own emphasis. Every picture of his I see seems to be a new one always; and the last is ever so surprising as to leave my mind incapable for the time being of apprehension of his other pictures. One picture of his is enough; there is the proof of his artistic greatness.

We did not know until recently what meant the words realism and idealism (should we thank the Western critics?) except this: "The artist, whatever he be, idealist or realist or what not, is good when he is true to his art. I mean that

technique or method of expression is secondary; even the seeming realistic picture of Oriental art is, when it is splendid, always subjective." I have many reasons to call Hiroshige an idealist or subjective artist, now playing an arbitrary art of criticism after the Western fashion, as I only see his artistic wisdom, but nothing else in his being true to Nature; that wisdom, I admit, helped his art to a great measure, but what I admire in him is the indefinable quality which, as I have no better word, I will call atmosphere or pictorial personality. It seems that he learned the secret from Chinese landscape art how to avoid femininity and confusion; the difference between his art and that of the Chinese artist is that where the one drew a *bonseki*, or tray-landscape, with sand from memory, the latter made a mirage in the sky. When Hiroshige fails he reminds me of Emerson's words of suggestion to look at Nature upside down through your legs; his success, as that of the Chinese artist, is poetry. And our Oriental poetry is no other kind but subjectivity. I have right here before me the picture called "Awa no Naruto," which is more often credited to be the work of the second Hiroshige; now let me, for once and all, settle the question that there were many Hiroshiges. It is my opinion there was only one Hiroshige; I say this because in old Japan (a hundred times more artistic than present Japan) the individual

personality was not recognised, and when an artist adopted the name of Hiroshige by merit and general consent, it meant that he grew at once incarnated with it; what use is there to talk about its second or third? I prefer to regard Hiroshige as the title of artistic merit since it has ceased in fact to be an individuality; indeed, where is the other artist, East or West, whose life-story is so little known as Hiroshige's? And I see so many pictures which, while bearing his signature, I cannot call his work, because I see them so much below the Hiroshige merit—for instance, the whole upright series of Tokaido and Yedo, and so many pictures of the "Noted Places in the Provinces of Japan"—because they are merely prose, and even as prose they often fail. But to return to this "Awa no Naruto," a piece of poem in picture, where the whirlpools of the strait, large and small, now rising and then falling in perfect rhythm, are drawn suggestively but none the less distinctly. I see in it not only the natural phenomenon of the Awa Strait, but also the symbolism of life's rise and fall, success and defeat; I was thinking for some time that I shall write a poem on it, although I could not realise it yet.

I have my own meaning when I call Hiroshige the Chinese poet. Upon my little desk here I see an old book of Chinese prosody; there is a popular Chinese verse, Hichigon Zekku, or Four

Lines with Seven Words in Each, which is almost as rigid as the English sonnet; and the theory of the sonnet can be applied to that Hichigon Zekku without any modification. We generally attach an importance to the third line, calling it the line "for change," and the fourth is the conclusion; the first line is, of course, the commencing of the subject, and the second is "to receive and develop." It seems that Hiroshige's good pictures very well pass this test of Hichigon Yekku qualification. Let me pick out the pictures at random to prove my words. Here is the "Bright Sky after Storm at Awazu," one of the series called Eight Views of the Lake Biwa; in it the white sails ready to hoist in the fair breeze might be the "change" of the versification. That picture was commenced and developed with the trees and rising hills by the lake, and the conclusion is the sails now visible and then invisible far away. Now take the picture of a rainstorm on the Tokaido. Two peasants under a half-opened paper umbrella, and the *Kago*-bearers naked and hasty, are the "third line" of the picture; the drenched bamboo dipping all one way and the cottage roofs shivering under the threat of Nature would be the first and second lines, while this picture-poem concludes itself with the sound of the harsh oblique fall of rain upon the ground. You will see that Hiroshige's good pictures have always such a

theory of composition; and he gained it, I think, from the Chinese prosody. In the East, more than in the West, art is allied to verse-making.

When we consider the fact he was the artist of only fifty years ago, it is strange why we cannot know more of his own life story, and how he happened to leave the words that generally pass as a farewell verse as follows:—

"I leave my brush at Azuma, and go on the journey to the Holy West to view the famous scenery there."

I cannot accept it innocently, and I even doubt its origin, as it is more prosaic than poetical. It is only that he followed after a fashion of his day if he left it, as the verse is poor and at best humorous. But when it is taken by the English seriousness, the words have another effect. Indeed, Hiroshige has had quite an evolution since he was discovered in the West; he is, in truth, more an English or European artist than a Japanese in the present understanding.

## V

## GAHO HASHIMOTO

THE art of Gaho (Hashimoto's *nom-de-plume*, signifying the "Kingdom Refined") is not to discard form and detail, as is often the case with the artists of the "Japanese school," while they soar into the grey-tinted vision of tone and atmosphere. His conventionalism—remember that he started his artist's life as a student of the Kano school, whose absurd classicism, arresting the germ of development, invited its own ruin—was not an enemy for him by any means. With the magic of his own alchemy he turned it into a transcendental beauty, bearing the dignity of artistic authority. I am sure he must have been glad to have the conventionalism for his magic to work on afterward; and when he left it, it seems to me, he looked back to it with a reminiscence of sad longing. Conventionalism is not bad when it does not dazzle. To make it suggestive is an achievement. To speak of Gaho's individuality in his pictures does no justice to him. His thought and conception are the highest, and at the least different from many

another artist in the West. It is not his aim at all to express the light and colour of his individuality. I believe that he even despised it. He had the volumes of the Oriental philosophy in himself; and his idea, I believe, was much influenced by the Zen sect Buddhism, whose finality in teaching is to forget your ego. Gaho often talked on *Kokoromochi* in picture, to use his favourite expression, which, I am sure, means more than "spirit." "Now what is it?" he was frequently asked. "Is it in its nature subjective or objective? Or is it something like a combination of the two?" He was never explanatory in speech in his life. He thought, as a Zen priest, that silence was the best answer. Let me explain his *Kokoromochi* in picture by my understanding.

It is life or vital breath of the objective character, which is painted by one who has no stain of eye or subjectivity. To lose your subjectivity against the canvas, or, I will say, here in Japan, the silk, is the first and last thing. And the perfect assimilation with the object which you are going to paint would be the way of emancipation. You have to understand that you are called out by a divine voice only to be a medium, but nothing else. I am afraid that the phrase, "Let Nature herself speak," has been over-used. However, it is peculiarly true in Gaho's case. I think Gaho thought that to flash the rays of his individuality in his picture was nothing but a

blasphemy against Nature. In that respect he is the humblest artist, and at the same time his humility is his own pride. Indeed, it is only through humility you are admitted to step into the inner shrine of Nature. Art for Gaho was not the matter of a piece of silk and Chinese ink, but a sacred thing. And to be an artist is a life's greatest triumph, and I am sure that Gaho was that.

I have been for some long time suspecting the nature of development of artistic appreciation of the Western mind, when only Hokusai's and Hiroshige's pictures, let me say, of red and green in tone of conception, called its special attention, and I even thought that our Japanese art, with the silence of blue and grey, would be perfectly beyond its power of reach. When Nature soars higher, she turns at once to the depth of dreams, whose voice is silence. To express the grey stillness of atmosphere and tone is the highest art, at least, to the Japanese mind. Not only in the picture, but in the " tea house " or incense ceremony, or in the garden, the appreciation of silence is the highest æsthetics. It gives you a strong but never abrupt thrill of the delight which is nobly touched by the hands of sadness, and lets you lose yourself in it, and slowly grasp something you may be glad to call ideal. And the same sensation you can entertain from Gaho's art, which you might think to be reminiscent

of a certain artistic paradise or Horai, the blest —one of his favourite subjects—enwrapped in silent air. You may call it idealism if you will, but it was nothing for him but the realisation. While you think it was his fancy, he saw it with his own naked eyes. It is true that he had been delivered from idealism. And I should say that dream, too, is not less real than you and I.

He never jars you. His art is a grey ghost of melody born from the bosom of depth and distance, like a far-off mountain. And it gives you a thrill of large space that binds you with eternity, and you will understand that what you call reality is nothing but a shiver of impulse of great Nature. His art, indeed, is the highest art of Japan, which, I believe, will be also the highest art of the West. It quite often stirs me with a Western suggestion, which, however, springs from the soil of his own bosom. I know that there is a meeting-point of the East and West, and that, after all, they are the same thing. He found the secret of art, which will remind any highly developed mind of both the East and West of some memory, and let it feel something like an emotion and fly into a higher realm of beauty. (Gaho's beauty is the beauty of silence.) It goes without saying that his art is simple, and his vision not complex. However, it is not only an Oriental philosophy to say that the

greatest simplicity is the greatest complexity, and I will say that Gaho holds both extremes. The elements of his art embrace something older than art, larger than life, something which inspires you with the sense of profundity. They give us strange and positive pulses of age and nature, and the sudden rapture of dream, for which we will gladly die. They give us the feeling of peace and silence, and suggest something which we wish to grasp. The delight we gain from Gaho is purely spiritual. His pictures are living as a ghost which vanishes and again appears.

His conception of Buddhism was not sad, although this religion is generally said to be a pessimism, but joyous and sympathetic. I am sure that to associate Buddhism with something of grief and tears is not a proper understanding at all. (See Gaho's pictures of the Buddha and *Rakans*, the Buddha disciples. They do not inspire any awfulness.) Tenderness and joy, with a touch of sorrow, which is poetry, are the road toward the Nirvana. For Gaho, silence meant the highest state of peacefulness. The sad joy, which is the highest joy, is an evolution which never breaks the euphony of life, while tears and grief are rebellious. His art inspires in us a great reverence, which is religious, and it is always justified. And it reveals a light of faith under which he was born as an artist, and he was glad to fulfil his appointed work. Then his

aspiration is never an accident, but the force which he cherished and has made grow.

Gaho's life of seventy-five years, which had closed in the month of January, 1907, can be divided into three periods. The first is that in which he was engaged in the pursuit of the ancient method by copying the models after the fashion of the Kano school; the second was that in which he slowly broke loose from the trammels of the Kano school, and ventured out to make a thorough exploration of the conspicuous features of various other schools; and the final was that in which he revaled himself nobly, with all the essence of art which he had earned from his tireless journey of previous days. In one word, he was the sum total of the best Japanese art. It is said that his long life was but one long day of study and work. He shut himself in his silent studio from early morning till evening, from evening till midnight, sitting before a piece of spread silk, with a Chinese brush in hand, as if before a Buddhistic altar where the holy candles burn. Now his research went deep in the Chinese schools of the ages of Sung, Yuen, and Ming, and then his thoughts lingered by the glimmer of the Higashiyama school's reminiscences. He confessed that he received no small influence from the Korin school, and I have more than one reason to believe that his knowledge of the Western art also was considerable. His catho-

licity of taste severely discriminated them, and his philosophy or conception of art stood magnificently above them, and never allowed them to disturb it under any circumstances. His great personality made him able to sing the song of triumph over his boundless artistic knowledge which had no power to oppress him. You might call his art a work of inspiration if you wish; but I am sure that he hated the word inspiration. It was through the religious exaltation of his mind that he could combine himself with Nature, and he and the subject which he was going to paint were perfectly one when the picture was done. His artist's magic is in his handling of lines. He believed that Japanese painting was fundamentally one of lines. What a charm, what a variety he had with them! See the difference between the lines he used for the pictures of a tiger or a dragon in clouds, the Oriental symbol of power and exaltation, and a bird or other delicate subject. The lines themselves are the pictures. However, that does not mean to undervalue his equal pre-eminence in his art of colour.

Gaho—or Gaho Hashimoto—was born in the fifth year of Tempo (1832) at Kobikicho, in Yedo, now Tokyo. From his seventh year he was taught how to draw and paint; at thirteen he became for the first time a pupil of Shosen Kano. It is said that Gaho was from an artistic family;

we can trace back to Yeiki Hashimoto, who lived some time in the Meiwa (1764), and from whom the family line has continued unbroken down to the present. Yeiki was originally a native of Kyoto; and there he happened to be known to Suwonokami Matsudaira, the Shogun's minister, who took him into his service; and on the lordship's return to Yedo Mr. Hashimoto accompanied his master. And he happened to settle at Kobikicho, where the Kano family lived, and soon gained Kano's friendship. Since that time the family line was continued by Ikyo, Itei, and Yoho. Gaho was Yoho's son. The year after he became a student of the Kano school he lost his father and also his mother. It is said to be extraordinary that he was called upon to act, after only four years of pupilage, as an assistant to his master Shosen in painting personal figures on the cedar door of the Shogun palace. At twenty years of age he was made head pupil. When he married he was twenty-six years old, and he began to lead his independent life, which turned tragic immediately. While the problem of getting his subsistence was not easy, his wife, whom he married with hope, became insane.

Mrs. Hashimoto was obliged to withdraw to the Higuchi village in Saitama prefecture, where was an estate of her husband's master, to avoid danger in the city; but she grew worse, and ran

mad. And it is said that such a sad turn was from the reason that she was often tormented by some country ruffians. She was soon taken back to the city again, where she was put under her husband's sole protection. Thus, when poor Gaho's mind was completely engrossed with his family trouble, the great restoration of Meiji (1866) was announced, and the feudalism which had prospered for some three hundred years fell to the ground. Whole Japan was thrown at once in the abyss of social tumult and change; under the speedily felt foreign invasion she lost herself entirely. What she did was to destroy old Japan; she thought it proper and even wise. It was the darkest age for art; when people did not know of the safety of their own existence, it goes without saying that they had no time to admire art and spend money for it. It is perfectly miraculous to think how the artists managed to live; there are, of course, many heart-rending stories about them.

Gaho's is sad enough, although it may not be saddest of all. He gave up his own painting temporarily, and tried to get a pittance by painting pictures on folding fans which were meant for exportation to China. And it is said that he was often scorned by his employer for his clumsy execution and, sadder still, he was told to leave his job. Is it Heaven's right to treat one who was destined to be a great artist like that? He

now resorted to a manual work of linking metal rings for making a sort of net-work; this chain-work, when finished, it is said, was made into something to be worn as an undergarment. Then he turned to take up the handicraft of making "koma," or bridges (a kind of small wooden or bamboo pillow inserted between the body of a musical instrument and its strings), of the *shamisen*, a Japanese guitar; and he was paid, I am told, one sen for a single piece of that koma, and to make twenty it took him three days. Fancy his earning of twenty sen for his steady work of three days! To recollect it in his later days must have been for him the source of tears. And fancy again his immense wealth when he died, the wealth which, not his greed, but his single-minded devotion to art invited! In fact, there was no person so unconcerned of money as this Gaho. It was his greatness to believe amid the sudden falling of art that the Japanese art which had grown from the very soil a thousand years old could not die so easily, and that the people's mind would open to it in a better condition; it was his prophetic foresight to behold the morning light in the midnight star. He was patiently waiting for his time when he should rise with splendour; and he never left himself to be ruined among the sad whirl of society and the nation's unsympathetic commotion. He walked slowly but steadily toward the star upon which he

set his lofty eyes. He stood aloof above the age. His life, not only in his art, was the song of triumph too.

To his relief, his insane wife died; and his appointment as a draughtsman at the Imperial Naval Academy meant for him a substantial help. He kept it up till the eighteenth year of Meiji, when the revival of Japanese art began to be chronicled, as Gaho expected, in the formation of art societies like the Kanga Kwai or Ryuchi Kwai. When he left the Naval Academy he was called to do service at the Investigation Bureau of Drawing and Painting in the Department of Education. His fellow-workers were the most lamented Hogai Kano, another great artist of modern Japan, and the late Mr. Okakura, that able art critic, in whose guidance Kano trusted. And those three men at the start are the true life-restorers of Japanese art. When the Tokyo School of Art was founded (22nd year of Meiji), Gaho was first made warden of the school, and then its director. And he was appointed professor when his investigation bureau happened to close up. However, he voluntarily resigned his professorship when Mr. Okakura, then the president of the school, was obliged to resign his office. Gaho took the principal's chair of the Nippon Bijitsu when Okakura established it afterwards; but this school soon became a story of the past.

Gaho has left his successors perhaps in those artists like Kwanzan Shimomura, Taikwan Yokoyama, Kogetsu Saigo and others, who are doing some noteworthy work. And I believe that he died at the right time if he must.

## VI

## KYOSAI

I ACKNOWLEDGED my friend's characterisation, after some reluctance, of our Kyosai Kawanabe as a Japanese Phil May; as the artist of *Punch* has often received the appellation of an English Hokusai, I do not see much harm, speaking generally, in thus falling into the feminine foible of comparison-making. Putting aside the question of the material achievement in art of those artists of the East and West, in truth so different (Kyosai surpassing the other, let me say, in variety), one will soon see that their innermost artistic characters are closely related; their seeming difference is the difference of education and circumstances from which even their original minds could hardly escape. I do not know much of the bacchanalianism of Phil May, but I know well enough that its sway is not so expansive in England as in Japan, at least old Japan, where the fantastic artists like Kyosai revelled around the ghosts they created in the sweet cup of *saké*. When we see Kyosai writing in front of his name the epithet Shojo, applied to the half-human

red-haired bacchanals of Chinese legend, we might say he betrayed, beside his full-faced confession of the love of the cup, the fact of his natural attachment to Toba Sojo, that apostle of humour, whose pictorial wantonness may have given him many a hint; indeed he might have, like Phil May, adorned the pages of *Punch*, although many an admirer of his, like Josiah Conder in *Paintings and Studies by Kyosai Kawanabe*, a sumptuous book on the artist containing the representative work of his last eight years, sees only the serious side of his work. And when he changed the Chinese character of his name from that of "dawn" to that of "madness," I think that he was laughing, at his own expense, over the lawless excitement he most comically acted when the excess of wine deceived him away from the imaginative path of inspiration, while, like Hokusai in the well-known epithet Gwakyo Rojin or Old Man Crazy at Painting, he sanctified to himself his own craze for painting. It is an interesting psychological study to speculate on the possible relation between the Japanese wine and our artists' minds; I think it was a superstition or faith, I might say, founded on tradition, that they called the wine an invoker of inspiration, as I see the fact to-day that many of them find the divine breath in something else. However, I am thankful to the Japanese liquid with its golden flash, if it really acted as the medium

through which Kyosai's many pictures came into existence, while his many other works, for instance the frontispiece woodcut of Professor Conder's Kyosai book, the elaborate picture of a Japanese beauty of the eleventh century, or the famous courtesan, Jigoku-dayu, in company with a demon, also the highly finished work owned by Mrs. William Anderson, or the other pictures I have seen more or less by accident, prove that he can be an equally splendid artist in a different direction while in perfect sobriety. He was born in the year 1831, that is about thirty years, roughly speaking, before the fall of the Tokugawa feudalism, when the age was fast decaying into loose morality and *saké*-drinking; and when he became a man, he found that the art's dignity under whose kind shadow he had studied as a student of Tohaku Kano, the leading artist of that famous Kano family in those days, had fallen flat, and that his ability made no satisfactory impression on people who had likely forgotten their artistic appreciation in the tumult of the Restoration; and I think it was natural enough for Kyosai to call upon the wine, as we say here, to sweep away the grievance, and to invoke, through it, a divine influence upon his art. And it is the old Japanese way to speak of wine-drinking and general revel with innocent gusto, as I find in *Kyosai Gwaden*, an illustrated autobiography here and there humorously exaggerated

but none the less sincere, from which all the writers on Kyosai, Professor Conder included, draw the materials of his life; he is often in danger of being criticised for his self-advertising audacity, this artist of fine madness. He often reminds me of Hokusai, not so much in his artistic expression as in temperament. The books, I mean *Kyosai Gwaden*, cannot be said, I think, to be more interesting in text than the pictures themselves; these are a series of off-hand sketches showing the actual scenes of his arrest and imprisonment, the story of which Professor Conder's English propriety excluded, although it seems perfectly harmless as it was, on his part, merely the conduct arising out of merriment from excess of wine; beside, his sketches show us the sickening gloominess of prison life in those days when one's freedom and right were denied rather than protected. Kyosai drank most terribly at a party held at a restaurant in Uyeno Park; he made on the spot the caricatures—while overhearing the talk of a foreigner on horseback who, being asked by a tea-house maid at Oji if he came alone, replied that he came accompanied by "a pair of fools"—in which he drew the picture of two people tying the shoe-strings of one man with the longest legs, and also the picture of men of the longest arms pulling out the hairs of Daibutsu's nostrils. The authorities, though it is not clear how the matter came to their knowledge,

stepped into the place and arrested him on the ground of insulting the officials; we must be thankful for the "enlightenment" of to-day when nobody would possibly get, as Kyosai got in 1870, ninety days in the cell from such pictures. The real meaning of Kyosai's impromptu in art is rather vague; but it is in my mind a satirical love to understand them as a huge laughter over Japan's slavishness to the West. And I often wonder if they are not caricatures which could be used to-day. Where is another Kyosai who could raise such a striking brush of scorn and sneer as to startle authority?

Kyosai used to absorb his spare time, while a young student at Kano's atelier, in the study of the *No* drama—out of natural love, I believe, combined with zeal to find an artistic secret in its heterogeneity, unlike the other students who sought their outside amusement nightly in popular halls of music and song; and it was an elderly lady of the Kano family who encouraged him by furnishing funds for teacher and costumes, being impressed, as a *No* admirer herself, by the young man's noble intention. It seems that Kyosai had not been able to fulfil the old lady's desire to see him in one of her favourite pieces called *Sambaso,* whether from his imperfect mastering of it then or from some other reason, when she suddenly fell ill and died; doubtless, Kyosai took the matter to his heart of hearts. It was on the

day of her third anniversary that he gathered all the musician accompanists of flute and drum before her lonely grave at Uyeno, and he, of course in the full costume of the character, performed the whole piece of the said *Sambaso*. Fancy the scene in the graveyard damp with mosses, dark with the falling foliage; and the actor is no other but fantastic Kyosai. Where could be found a more gruesome sight than that? This story among others we find in *Kyosai Gwaden* is most characteristic in that no other artist of the long Japanese history, perhaps with the possible exception of Hokusai, could make it fit for himself; the story reveals Kyosai's honesty almost to a fault, that sounds at once childish or madman-like, a temperament, unlike that of Southern Japan of female refinement and voluptuousness, which only the proud plebeianism of the Yedo civilisation (what an ultra-European imbecility of present Tokyo!) could create, the temperament, uncompromising, most difficult to be neutral. If we call Icho Hanabusa the most proper representative of old Yedo's Genroku Age, the time when people found spirituality through the consecration of materialism, I think we can well call Kyosai the representative of the later Tokugawa Age (although his life extended a good many years into the present Meiji era) which, again like his own art, fell with the abruptness of an oak-tree. I have some reason when I beg your

attention to the above characteristic story of Kyosai.

The love of the *No* drama, the classic of lyrical fascination exclusively patronised by nobles and people of taste, would never be taken as strange in Kyosai who stayed sixteen long years with that master of the old Kano art, Tohaku Kano, till he parted from it in his twenty-seventh year perhaps for an art wider and truer, or, let me say, to find his own artistic soul all by his own impulse and strength ; and when we see what attachment, even reverence, he had, during his whole life, toward the name of Toiku given him by the old master, the name we find in *Kyosai Gwaden* and other books, we can safely say that his classic passion in general must have been quite strong. The question is where his plebeianism could find room to rise and fall. That is the point where, not only in his art, also in his personality, he showed in spite of himself a tragi-comic oddity, mainly from the rupture between the two extremes of temperament. I am told by his personal friend who survives to-day that he was rather pleased to shock and frighten the most polite society which reverently congregated in the silent house of the *No* drama, to begin with, by his informal dress only suitable for the street shopkeeper or mechanic, then with his occasional shout of praise over the beautiful turn of the acting, in a voice touched with vulgar audacity ; he exclaimed,

"Umei!" Yedo slang for "splendid," which was at least unusual for a *No* appreciator. Nobody seemed, I am told, to criticise him when his good old heart was well recognised. So in his own art. I can point out, even from Professor Conder's collection alone, many a specimen where the aristocratic aloofness of air is often blurred by his plebeianism—for example in the pictures of "Daruma," "The Goddess Kwannon on a Dragon," "Carp swimming in a Lake," and others; the meaning I wish to impress on your mind will become clear directly when you compare them with the work of Sesshu, Motonobu, and Okyo on similar subjects. And again I have enough confidence to say that his elaborate pictures of red and green, after the Ukiyoye school, were more often weakened by the classic mist; although he did not wish to be looked upon as of that school, I think it was the main reason that he rather failed as an Ukiyoye artist. I endorse my friend to whom I praised and abused Kyosai lately only to get his true estimation, when he declared that Kyosai could not become one of the greatest artists of Japan simply from his inability to sacrifice his versatility; that versatility was the kind we can only find in Hokusai. He was the most distinguished example of one who failed, if he failed, from excess of artistic power and impulse.

Any one who sees *Kyosai Gwaden* will certainly be astonished by his extraordinary persistence

of study displayed in the first two volumes, in which he shows encyclopedically the delicate shades of variety of nearly all Japanese artists acknowledged great, from Kanaoka down to Kuniyoshi, also specimens of Chinese masters inserted at intervals. When I say that his artistic study was thorough even in the modern sense, I mean he always went straight to Nature and reality to fulfil what the pictures of old masters failed to tell him. *Kyosai Gwaden* tells, as an early adventure in Nature study, how he hid in a cupboard a human head which he picked up from a swollen river and horrified the family with his attempt to sketch it in his ninth year; when fire broke out and swept away even his own house, he became an object of condemnation, as he acted as if it were the affair of somebody else, and was seen serenely sketching the sudden clamour of the fire scene. The books contain somewhere a page or two of unusually amusing sketches of his students at work on different living objects, from a frog and turtle to cocks and fishes; Kyosai's love of fun in exaggeration (indeed exaggeration is one of the traits conspicuous even in his most serious work) again is seen in the sketches, when he made a monkey play at gymnastics and pull the hair of the earnest student with the brush. I often ask myself the question of the real merit of realism in our Japanese art, and further the question how much Kyosai gained from his

realistic accuracy; I wonder what artistic meaning there is, for instance, when people, even acknowledged critics, speak with much admiration of the anatomical exactness of those skeletons fantastically dancing to the ghost's music in that famous Jigoku-dayu picture. Let me ask again what the picture would lose, supposing, for instance, the most whimsical dancers around the courtesan's gorgeous robe had two or three joints of bone missing; is not Kyosai's realistic minuteness, which the artist was perhaps proud of displaying, in truth, rather a small subordinate part in his pictures? He was already in the present age, many years before his death, when many a weak artistic mind of Japan only received, from the Western art, confusion and reasoning, but not strength and passion. Now let me ask you: was it Kyosai's artistic greatness to accept the Western science of art?

He was never original in the absolute understanding as Sesshu, Korin, in a lesser degree Harunobu and Hokusai were; it might be that he was born too late in the age, or is it more true to say that his astonishing knowledge of the old Japanese art acted to hold him back from striking out an original line? Education often makes one a coward. When I say that he was himself the sum total of all Japanese art, I do not mean to undervalue him, but rather to do justice to his versatility and the swing of his power. And it

was his personality, unique and undefinable, that made his borrowing such an impression as we feel it in fact in his work. After all, he has to be judged, in my opinion, as an artist of technique.

I do not know what picture of his the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum have, except a few reproductions in books, which impressed me as poor examples. It is not too much to say that Professor Conder's Kyosai book is the first and may be the last; there is no more fit man than he, who as Kyosai's student knew him personally during the last eight years of his life. The book contains some good specimens which belong to that period; but what I most wish to see, are the pictures he produced in his earlier age. He is one of the artists who will gain much from selection; who will ever publish a book of twenty or thirty best pieces of his life's production?

## VII

## THE LAST MASTER OF THE UKIYOYE ART

YOSHITOSHI TSUKIOKA, as Kuniyoshi's home student of high talent in his younger days, it is said, had a key to the storehouse entrusted to his care, where Kuniyoshi treasured foreign colour-prints of saints or devils strayed from a Dutch ship, Heaven's gift most rare in those days, which made him pause a little and think about a fresh turn for his work. When we know that vulgarity always attracts us first and most, provided it is new to us, we cannot blame Yoshitoshi much when he reproduced in his work, indeed, stealing a march on his master, an immediate response to the Western art, whose secret he thought he could solve through varnishing. Doubtless it was no small discovery for Yoshitoshi. And the general public were equally simple when "Kwaidai Hyaku Senso," his first attempt after the new departure, quite impressive as he thought, was well received by them; when he went too far in this foreign imitation through his little knowledge, as in his "Battle at Uyeno," he varnished the whole picture. We have another instance that time

is, after all, the best judge, as we know that those pictures of Yoshitoshi's early days, when he had not yet found his own art, are most peacefully buried under the blessed oblivion and heavy dusts to-day. You cannot make an art only by wisdom and prayer, and it is better to commit youthful sin when one must, like Yoshitoshi, with his period of foreign imitation, since his later work would become intensified, chastened, and better balanced by his repentance.

To speak most strictly, Kuniyoshi should be called the last master of the Ukiyoye school, this interesting branch of Japanese art interpreting the love and romance of the populace, peculiarly developed through the general hatred of the aristocratic people; but I have reason to call Yoshitoshi Tsukioka the very last master of that school, in the same sense that we call Danjuro or Kikugoro the last actors, not less by the fact of the age, already heterogeneous, naturally weakened for holding up the old Japanese purity, against which he struggled hard to find an artistic compromise, than by his own gift. I have often thought that, if he had been born earlier, he might have proved himself another Hokusai, or, better still, if the time were still earlier, when love and sensuality were the same word in peace and prosperity, he would not have been much below Utamaro. If he failed, as indeed he failed, now, looking back from to-day,

it was the failure of his age. Although it may sound paradoxical, I am pleased to say that his failure was his success, because I see his undaunted versatility glorified through his failure; he helps, more than any other artist, the historian of Japanese art to study the age psychologically—in fact, he serves him more than Hokusai or Utamaro. He is an interesting study, as I said before, as the last master, indeed, as much so as Moronobu Hishikawa as the recognised first master. I say Yoshitoshi failed, but I do not mean that he was a so-called failure in his lifetime; on the contrary, he was one of the most popular artists of modern Japan—at least, in the age of his maturity; what I should like to say is that the artistic success of one age does never mean the success of another age, and Yoshitoshi's success is, let me say, the success of failure when we now look back upon it. I can distinctly remember even to-day my great disappointment, now almost twenty-five years ago, as a most ardent admirer of Yoshitoshi, when, appearing before the publisher's house as early as seven o'clock the morning after I had read the announcement of his new picture of a dancer, I was told that the entire set of copies was exhausted; his popularity was something great in my boyhood's days. It was in 1875 that he first took the public by storm with his three sheets of pictures called "Ichi Harano," an historical thing which showed Yasumasa, a

court noble, playing a bamboo flute under the moonlight, perfectly unconscious of a highwayman, Hakama Dare by name, following him, stepping softly upon the autumn grasses, ready to stab the noble with his sword. The popularity of this picture was heightened by the fact that Danjuro, the greatest tragedian of the modern Japanese stage, wanted to reproduce the pictorial effect in a play, and have Shinsuke Kawatake write up one special scene to do honour to Yoshitoshi, under the title "Ichi Harano, by Yoshitoshi, Powerful with his Brush." It was a great honour indeed, such as no artist to-day could expect to receive. We have many occasions, on the other hand, when Yoshitoshi served the actors and his bosom friends, Danjuro and Kikugoro, to popularise their art. Since the day of the First Toyokuni, it had been the custom for the artists of this popular school to work together with the stage artists.

Yoshitoshi brought out the series of three called "Snow, Moon, and Flower," two of them commemorating Danjuro in his well-known rôle of Kuyemon Kezuri, and one Kikugoro in Seigen, whose holy life of priesthood was disturbed by love beyond hope. Although I hesitate to say they are the best specimens—yes, they are in their own way—they have few companions in the long Ukiyoye annals as theatrical posters, for which exaggeration should not be much blamed.

The striking point of emphasis in design, hitting well the artistic work, make them worthy. I have them right before me while writing this brief note on Yoshitoshi. I recall what I heard about the Kezuri picture; it is said that the artist spent fully three days to draw this "hundred-days' wig," to use the theatrical phrase. What an astonishing wig that rôle had to wear. And what painstaking execution of the artist; and again what wonderful dexterity of the Japanese carver and printer. At the time when these pictures were produced it is not too much to say that the arts of carving and printing had reached the highest possible point—that is to say, they had already begun to fall. I am pleased to attach a special value to them as the past pieces which well combined those three arts. By the way, the name of the carver of those pictures is Wadayu. Now, returning to Yoshitoshi and his actors-friends. The former was always regarded by the latter as an artistic adviser whose words were observed as law; Yoshitoshi was the first person Danjuro used to look up when in trouble with the matter of theatrical design in dress. I have often heard how the artist helped Kikugoro. This eminent actor once had a great problem how to appear as Shini Gami, or the Spirit of Death, in the play called *Kaga Zobi*, and asked Yoshitoshi for a suggestion; and it is said that a rough sketch he drew at once enlightened Kikugoro's

bewildered mind, and, as a result, he immortalised the rôle. It was the age when realism, of course, in more vague, doubtful meaning than the present usage, had completely conquered the stage, the old idealistic stage art having fallen off the pedestal. Certainly Danjuro, the first of all to be absorbed in that realism which prevailed here twenty or twenty-five years ago, did never serve the stage art for advancement, but, on the contrary, it was the realism, if anything, that cheapened, trivialised, and vulgarised the time-honoured Japanese art; but it seemed that there was nobody to see that point of wisdom. It is ridiculous to know how Danjuro insisted, as Tomonori, in the play of *Sembon Sakura*, that the blood upon his armour should be painted as real as possible, and troubled the great artistic brush of Yoshitoshi on each occasion during the whole run of the play; but how serious the actor was in his thought and determination! Again that realism was the main cause why Yoshitoshi's art failed to compete with the earlier Ukiyoye artists like Shunsho, Utamaro, and even Hokusai; it was an art borrowed from the West doubtless, when I observe how Yoshitoshi, unlike the earlier artists, was delighted to use the straight, forceful lines as the modern Western illustrators; the picture called "Daimatsuro" is a fit example in which he carried out that tendency or mannerism with most versatility. I daresay that his pic-

tures, whether of historical heroes or professional beauties, which were least affected by the so-called realism or Western perspectives and observed carefully the old Ukiyoye canons, limiting themselves in the most artistic shyness, would be only prized as adorning his name as the last master; for the ninety per cent. we have no grief for their hastening into blessed dusts. I have in my collection the three-sheet picture called "Imayo Genji," showing the view of Chigoga Fuchi at Yenoshima, with the romantic posture of four naked fisherwomen, which is dated very early in Yoshitoshi's artistic life, no doubt being the work of the time when he was still a home student at Kuniyoshi's studio or workshop; you can see the artist's allegiance to his teacher in those somewhat stooping woman figures; there is no mistake to say that Yoshitoshi, at least in this picture, had studied Hiroshige and Hokusai to advantage for the general effect of rocks and fantastic waves.

Although it is clear that it is not a specimen of his developed art, I have in mind to say that it will endure, perhaps as one of the best Ukiyoye pictures of all ages, through its youthful loyalty to the traditional old art and the painstaking composition for which the best work is always marked. How artistically troubled, even lost, are his later works, though once they were popular and even admired!

Although he was, as I said above, most popular in the prime of his life (by the way he died in his fifty-fourth year in June of 1892), he had many years of poverty and discouragement when he complained of the fact that he was born rather too late; his hardship, not only spiritual, but material, soon followed after the happy period of student life with Kuniyoshi, when his artistic ambition forced on him independence. It was the time most inartistic, if there was ever such a time in any country, when the new Meiji Government had hardly settled itself on the sad ruins of the Tokugawa feudalism, under which all prosperity and peace, even art and humanity, were buried, and the people in general even thought the safety of their lives was beyond reach, now with the so-called Civil War of Meiji Tenth, and then with that or this. How could the artists get the people's support under such a condition of the times; indeed, Yoshitoshi fought bitterly for his bare existence then. It was the time when he was extremely hard-up that his home-students, Toshikage and Toshiharu, bravely served him in the capacity of cook or for any other work; we cannot blame him that he tried, with such pictures as the series called "Accident of the Lord Ii," to amuse and impress the people's minds, which grew, in spite of themselves, to love battle and blood. And the best result he received from such work, happy to

say for his art, was the realisation of failure. But he was quite proud, I understand, when he published it, and even expected a great sale. And when he could not sell it at all, it is said, he determined that he would run away alone from Tokyo for good, leaving his students behind. Although there is no record of its sale to-day, I am sure that it did not sell well, or, in another way of saying, it sold well enough to save him from the shame of running away. Doubtless the people demanded pictures of such a nature, perhaps to illustrate the time's happening, as it was the time before the existence of any graphic or illustrated paper, and to fill that demand Yoshitoshi brought out a hundred pictures of battles and historical heroes, more or less in bloody scenes, which are mostly forgotten. It was in 1885 that he fairly well found his own art (good or bad) with the historical picture, "Kiyomori's Illness"; the chief character, the Lord Kiyomori, suffered from fever and dream, as we have it in legend, as a destiny brought from his endless brutality and covetousness; the fact that Yoshitoshi's mind was much engaged in the study of the Shijoha school at that time will be seen, particularly in this picture, of which the background is filled with the faint echo of great Okyo in the drawing of the Emma, or Judge of Hades, the green demon, and other things of awful demonstration. "Inaka Genji," a picture

to commemorate the occasion of Ransen's changing his name to Tanehiko, and "Ukaino Kansaku," a picture of the spirit of a dead fisherman being saved by the holy prayer of the priest Nichiren, are the work of about the same time. When Yoshitoshi began to publish his series of one hundred pieces under the name of "Tsuki Hyakushi," or "One Hundred Views of the Moon," his popularity almost reached high-water mark; I can recollect with the greatest pleasure how delighted I was to be given a few of these moon pictures as a souvenir from Tokyo when I was attending a country grammar school, and I can assure you that my artistic taste and love, which already began to grow, expressed a ready response to value. Among the pictures, I was strongly attracted by one thing, which was the picture of a crying lady alone in a boat, with a *biwa* instrument upon her knees; from admiration I pasted the picture on a screen, which remained as it was during these twenty years, unspoiled, spotless, and perfect, and I had the happy occasion to see it with renewed eyes lately when I returned to my country home. I felt exactly the same impression, as good as at the first sight of twenty years ago. Although the series carry the title of moon, nearly all of the pictures have no moon at all; it was the artistic merit of the artist to suggest that they were all views of the moonlight. We can point out many shortcomings in his work

as a pure Ukiyoye artist; but, after all, I think that nobody will deny his rare and versatile talent. If only he had been born at the better and proper time! And if we must blame his degeneration, I think it is quite safe to say that the general public has to share equally in the criticism. He was an interesting personality, full of stories and anecdotes, which the English people would be glad to hear about when they are well acquainted with his work; but I will keep them for some other occasion, because I wish at present to introduce him simply through his work. Let it suffice to say that he was humane and lovable, having a great faith in his own class of people—that is, the plain street-dwellers; when I say he was, too, the artist or artizan of Tokyo or Yedo, like Utamaro, Hokusai, and Kuniyoshi, I mean that he was gallant and chivalrous, always a friend of the lowly, and a hater of sham.

He was born in 1839, to use the Japanese name of the era, the Tenth of Tempo, at Shiba of Yedo, present Tokyo. When a little boy, he was adopted by the family of Tsukioka; his own name was Yonejiro. Like other Japanese artists, he had quite many *gago* or *noms de plume*; to give a few of them, Ikkasai, Sokatei, Shiyei, and others. Although he did not change his dwelling-place as Hokusai did, he moved often from one house to another; it was at Miyanaga Cho of Hongo where he married Taiko. He bought a house at

Suga Cho, Asakusa, in 1885; but his sensitive mind was disturbed when he was told by a fortune-teller that the direction of his house was unlucky, and was again obliged to move to Hama Cho of Nihonbashi, when he was taken ill with brain disease. As I said before, he died in June of 1892. The students he left behind include many artists already dead; to give the best known, Keishu Takeuchi; Keichu Yamada and Toshihide Migita are the names of artists still active to-day.

## VIII

## BUSHO HARA *

OFTEN I tried to write about Busho Hara the artist (I use the term in the most eclectic Japanese conception, because his art served more frequently to make his personality distinguished through its failure rather than through its success); that my attempt turned to nothing was perhaps because my mind, solitary and sad like that of Hara, did not like to betray the secret of the recluse whose silence was his salutation. Besides, my heart and soul and all were too much filled with this Busho Hara from the fact of his recent unexpected death—(by the way, he was in his forty-seventh year, that interesting age for an artist, as it would be the beginning of a new page, good or bad); and I am, in one word, perfectly confused on the subject. When I wish to think of his art alone, and even to measure it, if possible, through the most dangerous, always foolish way of comparison with others, I find always, in spite of myself, that my mind, even before it has fairly started on his

* See the Appendix

art, is already carried away by the dear, sweet, precious memory of his rare personality. "Above all, he was rarest as friend," my mind always whispers to me every two minutes from the confusion of my thought, this and that, and again that and this, on him. To say that I think of him too much and for too many things would be well-nigh the same as to say that I am unfitted to tell about him intelligibly. I confess that I had a little difference with him on the subject of his own art here and there, while I was absorbed in his conversation or criticism (I always believed and said—did he dislike me when I said that ?—he was a better and greater critic than artist), now by the cozy fire of a winter evening, then with the trees and grasses languid with summer's heat; he was the first and last man to whom I went when I felt particularly ambitious and particularly tired, and I dare say that he was pleased to see me. My own delight to have him as my friend was in truth doubled, when I thought that his personality and art, remarkable as they are honest, true, and sympathetic, were almost unknown at home except in a little narrow community; as I said before, he was a recluse. In England, many readers of Mr. Markino's book, *A Japanese Artist in London*, will remember Hara's name, as it is frequently repeated in the book; and a certain well-known English critic had an occasion once or twice to

mention his name and kindly comment on his work in the *Graphic*. That was in 1906, when he was about to leave London after a few years' stay there. "Shall I go to England again for a change or to take a few pictures of mine?" he often exclaimed. England was his dream, as she is mine. How unfalteringly our talk ran; every time the subject was England and her art.

"Now is it settled, let us suppose," Hara would say in the course of talk, slightly twisting his sensitive mouth, holding up straight back his well-poised head (what a philosopher's eyes he had, gentle and clear), "that we shall go to England some time soon in the future. Yes, we shall go there even if we are not begged by Japan to leave the country. The most serious question is, however, where we shall sleep and dine. I have had enough experience of a common English boarding-house; I am haunted even to-day by the ghosts of Yorkshire pudding and cold ham. And suppose that a daughter or a son of that boarding-house might sing aloud a popular song every Saturday evening; I should like to know if there is anything more sad than that. Still, suppose that one next to you at table will ask you every evening how your work might sell; certainly that will be the moment when you think you will leave England at once for good. But it is England's greatness that she has art appreciators as well as buyers. Oh, where is the true art ap-

preciator in Japan, even while we admit that we have the buyers ? I will take a few pictures with me when I go to England next, and show them to the right sort of people ; really, truly, only London of all the cities of the world has the right sort of people in any line of profession. Besides, I should like to examine the English art again and let the people there listen to my opinion ; I was not enough prepared for such a work when I went there last."

But I believe that his own self-education in art, which he most determinedly started at the National Gallery, where he was forcibly attracted by Rembrandt and Velasquez, must have been happily developed, when the same *Graphic* critic spoke of his " sensitive and searching eyes," and (printing Hara's intelligent rendering of Rembrandt's " Jewish Merchant " on the page) said that it proved the painter was at the root of the matter, and declared that the critic had rarely seen better or more intelligent copy, and again to prove that Hara was not merely a copyist or imitator, he also reproduced on the same page his original work called " The Old Seamstress." And I am doubly pleased to find that the same English critic mentioned him somewhere as a " keen and acute critic, but generous withal " ; I was so glad to have Hara as my friend for the rare striking power of his critical enlightenment (Oh, where is another sane artist like himself ?),

even when he failed to make a strong impression on me with his art. It was his immediate question on his return home how to apply the technique of oil painting he learned in London to Japanese subjects; if he failed in his art, as he always believed and I often thought he did, it was from the reason, I dare think, that he had indeed too clear a view of self-appraisal or self-criticism under whose menace he always took the attitude of an outsider towards his own work. How often I wished he were wholly without that critical power, always hard to please, altogether too fastidious! His artistic ambition and aim were so absolute and most highly puritanic; as a result, he was ever so restless and sad with his art, and often even despised himself. He had a great enemy, that was no other but his own self; he was more often conquered by it than conquering it. I have never seen in my life a more sad artist with the brush, facing a canvas, than this Busho Hara. Besides, his poor health, which had been failing in the last few years, only worked to make his critical displeasure sharper and more peculiar; and he utterly lost the passion and foolishness of his younger days. How often we promised, when we parted after a long chat, which usually began with Yoshio Markino, dear friend of his and mine in London, and as a rule ended with reminiscences of our English life, that we would hereafter return to our younger age, if possible to our boys' days,

and even commit the innocent youthful sins and be happy ; but when we met together again, we were the same unhappy mortals, Hara with a brush, I with a pen. He always looked comforted by my words when I told him my own tragedy and difficulties to write poetry ; both of us exclaimed at once with the same breath and longed for life's perfect freedom. How he wished to cut away from himself and bid a final farewell to many portrait commissions, and become a lone pilgrim on Nature's great highway with only his brush and oil ; that was his dream.

Let me repeat again that he was sad with his brush only to make his art still sadder ; when he was most happy, it was the time when he left his own studio to forget his unwilling brush and send his love imaginations under the new foliage of spring trees and make them ride on the freedom of the summer air. How he planned for future work while contemplating great Nature ; he was a dreamer in the true sense. And dream was to him more real as he thought it almost practicable. I do not mix any sarcasm in my words when I say that he was a greater artist when he did not paint ; he rose to his full dignity only when out of his studio ; and it was most unfortunate that I found him always ill when he was out of it. But I will say that I never saw one like himself so well composed, even satisfied, on a sick bed ; that might have been from the reason that his being

absorbed in Nature, his thought and contemplation on her, did not give an opportunity for bodily illness to use its despotism. He gave me in truth even such an impression that he was glad to be ill so he could lay himself right before the thought of great Nature. Once in the spring of 1911 I called on him at the hospital, when he successfully underwent a surgeon's knife (he was suffering from typhlitia); although he was quite weak then, he was most ambitious and happy to talk on the beauty of Nature; and he said: "I almost wonder why I did not become ill and lay me down on this particular bed of this hospital before, and (pointing to the blue sky through the window with his pale-skinned slender hand that was unmistakably an artist's) see how the eastern sky changes from dusk to milky grey, again from that grey to rosy light. How often I wished you, particularly you, might be here with me all awakening in this room, perhaps at half-past three o'clock; that is the time exactly when the colours of the sky will begin to evolve. Thank God all the other people are sleeping then. At such a moment I feel as if all Nature belonged to me alone in the whole world, and I alone held her secrets and her beauty; I am thankful for my illness, as it has made me thus restful in mind and allowed me to carefully observe Nature, and build my many future plans. I can promise you that I will whistle my adieu to the commissioned work,

all of it, when I grow stronger again, and become a real artist, the real artist even to satisfy you. Oh, how I could paint the mysterious changes of the sky which I have been studying for the last week!"

Again I saw him in his sick-bed at his little home one afternoon; we grew, as a matter of course, quite enthusiastic and passionate as our talk was on art and artists; it was the foundation of his theory, when he expanded on it, not to put any difference between the arts of the East and the West; he seemed to agree with me on that day when I compared even recklessly Turner with our Sesshu. Although he entered into his art through the technique, I observed that he was speedily turning to a spiritualist; I often thought that he was a true Japanese artist even of the Japanese school, while he adopted the Western method. (It was the *Graphic* critic who said that he was "perhaps the ablest Japanese painter in our method who has visited our shores.") He and I saw that time the famous large screen by Goshun belonging to the Imperial Household called "Shosho no Yau," or "The Night Rain at Shosho"; as our minds were still absorbed in its soft mellow atmosphere and grey flashes of sweeping rain, we often repeated our great admiration for that Goshun. "It's not merely an art, but Nature herself," he exclaimed. The afternoon of the summer day was slowly falling;

the yellow sunbeams, like an elf or fairy, were playing almost fantastically with the garden leaves; Hara was looking on them absent-mindedly, and when he awoke from his dream, he said: "Suppose you cut off a few of those leaves, even one leaf, with that particular sunlight on them; they are indeed a great art. Who can paint them as exactly they are? To prove it is a real art, when the artist is great and true, a large canvas and big subject are not necessary at all; one single leaf would be enough for his subject. I recall my first impression of Turner's work; I thought then that even one inch square of any picture of his in the National Gallery would be sufficient to prove his great art. I always vindicated his mastery of technique to the others who had the reverse opinion; what made Turner was never his technique. To talk about technique. I believe that even I have a better technique than is shown in most of the pictures drawn by Rossetti; but there is only one Rossetti in the world." On my way home after leaving him, I could not help wondering if he were not turning to a pessimist: I was afraid that he was in his heart of hearts denying his own ability and art.

One day last September, when my soul felt the usual sadness with the first touch of autumn, I received a note from Hara saying that his stomach had been lately troubled, and he wished

I would call on him as he wanted to be brightened by my presence. I could not go then to see him on account of one thing and another; and when I was told by one of his friends and mine that Hara's illness was said to be cancer, even in its acute form, and that he was eagerly expecting my call, I hurried at once to his house. He was very pale and thin. As I was begged by Mrs. Hara at the door not to let him talk too much, as it was the doctor's command, I even acted as if I hated conversation on that day; it was Hara (bless his sympathetic gentle soul) who, on the contrary, wished to make me happy and interested by his talk. He talked as usual on various arts and artists; when he slowly entered into his own domestic affairs, he said: "I have decided to sell all my works of the last ten years, good or bad, among my rich friends, and raise a sufficient fund to provide for my old mother and wife; to have no child is at least a comfort at this moment. I think I call myself fortunate since such a scheme appears to be quite practicable; but if I could have even one picture which I could proudly leave for posterity—that might be too great an ambition for an artist of my class. Will you laugh at me when I say how I wish to live five years more, if not five years, two years at least, if not two years, even one year? It might be better, after all, for me to die with hope than to live and fail." With a sudden thought he changed the subject; he

thought, doubtless, he had no right to make me unnecessarily sad, and resumed the talk on Hokusai and Utamaro where he had left off a little while before. "I wish that you will see Utamaro's picture in my friend's possession; it is, needless to say, the picture of a courtesan. How that lovely woman sits! (Here Hara changed his attitude and imitated the woman in the picture.) Oh, these charming bare feet! That is where Utamaro put his best art; I cannot forget the feeling that I felt with the most attractive naked heels of the picture."

I gave him many instances of doctors' mistakes to encourage him, before I left his house. I called on him two weeks or ten days later; but I was not admitted to his presence, as the doctor had already forbade any outside communication. At my third call I was told that he was growing still worse; it was on October 29 that I made my fourth call, and I found at once that the house had been somewhat upset. Alas, my friend Busho Hara had gone already to his eternal rest! I rushed up to the upstairs room where the cold body of the artist was lying; he could not see or hear his friend. I cried. I was told by one of Hara's friends, who saw his last moment, how sorry he was that he did not see me when his final end approached, and that he had begged him to tell me that he was wrong in what he told me before about art. Now, what did he mean by that? I

already suspected, as I said before, that he was growing to deny his own art; now I should like to understand by that final special message to me that he wished to wholly deny all the human art of the world against great Nature before his death. When he grew weaker and weaker, I think that he found it more easy to dream of Nature; whether conscious or unconscious, he must have been in the most happy state, at least for his last days, as he was going to join himself with her. I never saw such a dead face so calm, so sorrowless, like Hara's; it reminded me of a certain Greek mask which I saw somewhere; indeed, he had a Greek soul in the true meaning.

We six or seven friends of his kept a *tsuya*, or wake, before his coffin, as is the custom, on the night of the 29th; the night rapidly advanced when the reminiscences of this passed great artist were told to keep us from falling asleep. One man was speaking of the story of Hara's friendship with Danjuro Ichikawa, the great tragedian of the old *kabuki* school of the modern Japanese stage. Once he played the rôle of Benkei in "Adaka ga Seki," which he wished Hara to draw; it was a most unusual treat on the actor's part to give the artist one whole box at the Kabuki Theatre during fifteen days only for that purpose, where he appeared every day not to draw, but to look at the acting. But Hara very quickly sketched him one

day at the moment when he thought that the actor was prolonging his acting at a certain place to make him easy to sketch; in fact, Danjuro made his acting in some parts stand still for fifteen minutes. Strangely enough, the other actors who were playing with him did not know that, while Hara rightly read the actor's intention and thought. Danjuro said afterwards that Mr. Hara understood him through the power of his being a great artist. Did he draw the picture and finish it? That is the next question. He did not, as was often the case with Hara; he wrote the actor bluntly he was sorry that this spirit was gone, making it impossible to advance. The one who told the story exclaimed: "I never saw an artist like Hara so slow to paint, or who found it so difficult to paint."

Among us there was a well-known frame manufacturer, Yataya by name, who, it is said, was Hara's very first friend in Tokyo, where he came thirty years before from his native Okayama; he spoke next on his dear friend: "He made his call on me at my store in Ginza almost every night; he never came up into the room, but sat always at the shop front. And there he gazed most thoughtfully on the passing crowd of the street with his fixed eyes; he made himself quite an unattractive figure especially for the shop front. 'Who is that sinister-looking fellow?' I was often asked. I am sure that he must have been

there studying the people; his interest in anything was extremely intent. He was a great student."

While I am now writing upon Hara, I feel I see that he is sitting at a certain shop front, perhaps of Hades. Is he not studying the action of the dead souls clamorous as in their living days?

## IX

## THE UKIYOYE ART IN ORIGINAL

I OFTEN think the general impression that the best Ukiyoye art reveals itself in colour-print has to be corrected in some special cases, because the Ukiyoye art in original *kakemono*, though not so well appreciated in the West, is also a thing beautiful; and I feel proud to say that I have often seen those special cases in Japan. On such occasions I always say that I am impressed as if the art were laughing and cursing fantastically over the present age, whose prosaic regularity completely misses the old fascination of romanticism which Japan of two or three hundred years ago perfected by her own temperament. Whenever I see it (mind you, it should be the best Ukiyoye art in original) at my friend's house by accident, or in the exhibition hall, my heart and soul seem to be turning to a winged thing fanned by its magic; and when my consciousness returns, I find myself narcotised in incense, before the temple of art where sensuality is consecrated through beauty.

It is not too much to say that Shunsho Katsu-

kawa, who died in 1792 at the age of ninety-seven, gained more than any other artist from the originals, through his masterly series of twelve pieces, "A Woman's Year," owned by Count Matsura, a most subtle arrangement of figures whose postures reach the final essence of grace perhaps from the delicate command of artistic reserve, the decorative richness of the pictures heightened by life's gesticulation of beauty; whilst the harmony of the pictorial quantity and quality is perfect. Behind the pictures we read the mind of the artist with the critic's gift of appraising his own work. When we realise the somewhat exaggerated hastiness of later artists, for example, artists like Toyokuni the First, or Yeizan (the other artists being out of the question, of course), Shunsho's greatness will be at once clear. It may have been his own thought to modify the women's faces from the artless roundness of the earlier artists to the rather emphatic oblong, from simplicity to refinement, although I acknowledge it was Harunobu's genius to make the apparent want of effort in women's round faces flow into the sad rhythm of longing and passion, a symbol of the white, weary love; in Harunobu we have a singular case of the distinction between simplesse and simplicité. It was the old Japanese art to portray delicacy only in the women's hands and arms; but certainly it was the distinguished art of Shunsho, with many other contemporary Ukiyoye artists,

to make the necks, especially the napes, the points of almost tantalising grace; what a charm of abandon in those shoulders! And what a beautiful elusiveness of the slightly inclined faces of the women! I am always glad to see Shunsho's famous picture, "Seven Beauties in a Bamboo Forest," owned by the Tokyo School of Art, in which the romantic group of chignons leisurely promenade, one reading a love-letter, another carrying a shamisen instrument, through the shade of a bamboo forest. Not only in this picture, but in many other arrangements of women and sentiment, Shunsho reminds me of the secret of Cho Densu of the fifteenth century in his elaborate Rakan pictures, particularly in the point that the figures, while keeping their own individual aloofness, perfectly well fuse themselves in the alembic of the picture into a composition most impressive. And you will soon find that when the sense of monotony once subsides, your imagination grows to see their spiritual variety.

It is rather difficult to see a best specimen of the originals of Harunobu or even of Utamaro. I think there is some reason, however, to say in the case of Utamaro that he did not leave many worthy pictures in original, because he made the blocks, fortunately or unfortunately, a castle to rise and fall with; while I see the fact on the one side that, while he was not accepted in the polite society of his time, he gained as a consequence much strength

through his restriction of artistic purpose. There was nothing more ridiculous for the Ukiyoye artists of those days than to intrude their work of the so-called "Floating World" into the aristocratic *tokonoma*, the sacred alcove of honour for the art of a Tosa or a Kano, and to attempt to call themselves Yamato Yeshi, whatever that means. What wisdom is there to become neutral, like Yeishi or in some degree Koryusai, who never created any distinct success either as Ukiyoye artist or as so-called polite painter. I can easily read the undermeaning how they were even insulted, by the cultured class, when they tried to satisfy their own resentment by such an assumption of Yamato Yeshi ("the Yamato artist," Yamato being the classic name of Japan); I see more humiliation in it than pride. The contempt displayed toward them, however, was not so serious till the appearance of Moronobu, who created his own art out of their sudden descent; his realism accentuated itself in the portrayal of courtesans and street vagrants of old Yedo, for the popular amusement, at the huge cost of being criticised as immoral. The artists before his day, even those to-day roughly termed the Ukiyoye artists, were the self-same followers. To begin with Matabei, after the Kano, Tosa, and Sumiyoshi schools successively, their work was strengthened or weakened according to the situation by the irresistibility of plebeianism; it is clear that the final goal for their work

was, of course, the *tokonoma* of the rich man and the nobles. And it seems that they must have found quite an easy access into that scented daïs, if I judge from the pictures of the "Floating World" (what an arbitrary name that!) that remain to-day. They had, in truth, no necessity to advertise themselves as Yamato Yeshi, like some artists of the later age who were uneducated and therefore audacious; and in their great vanity wished to separate themselves from their fellow-workers; while their work has a certain softness —though it be not nobility—at least not discordant with the grey undertone of the Japanese room, doubtless they lack that strength distilled and crystallised into passionate lucidity which we see in the best colour-prints. When I say that Moronobu was the founder of Ukiyoye art, I mean more to call attention to the fact that the Japanese block print was well started in its development from his day, into which process the artists put all sorts of spontaneity, at once cursing creed and tradition. As for the Ukiyoye artists, I dare say their weakness in culture and imagination often turned to force; they gained artistic confidence in their own power from their complete withdrawal from polite society. Such was the case with Utamaro and Hiroshige. I wonder what use there was to leave poor work in the original like that of Toyokuni and Yeizan, whose works often serve only to betray their petty ambition.

I have seen enough of the originals of this interesting Ukiyoye art, beginning with Matabei and Katsushige; Naganobu Kano, the former's contemporary, is much admired in the series of twelve pictures, "Merry-making under the Flowers," with the illogical simplicity natural to the first half of the seventeenth century. The fact that the name "Floating World" did not mean much in those days can be seen in the work of Rippo Nonoguchi or Gukei Sumiyoshi, whose classical respect weakened the pictorial impression. Mr. Takamine, who is recognised as the keenest collector of Ukiyoye art in Japan, has quite an extensive collection of the works of Ando Kwaigetsudo (1688–1715), Anchi Choyodo, Dohan Kwaigetsudo (early eighteenth century), Doshu Kwaigetsudo, Doshin Kwaigetsudo, Nobuyuki Kameido, Rifu Tosendo, Katsunobu Baiyuken, and Yeishun Baioken, all of them contemporaries of Doshu. Although their merit is never so high, even when not questionable, we can imagine that their work must have been quite popular, even in high quarters; among them Dohan might be the cleverest, but as a Japanese critic says, his colour-harmony is marred by ostentatious imprudence. I have seen the best representation of Sukenobu Nishikawa in "Woman Hunting Fireflies," soft and delicate. The other artists I came to notice and even admire are Choshun Miyakawa, Masanobu Okumura, Shigemasa Kitawo, and other

names. I think that the time should come when the original Ukiyoye art, too, should be properly priced in the West; we are still sticking to our hereditary superstition that no picture is good if we cannot hang it in the *tokonoma*, where we burn incense and place the flowers arranged to invoke the greyness of the air. But I wonder why we cannot put an Utamaro lady here on the Japanese *tokonoma*.

# X

## WESTERN ART IN JAPAN

THE Japanese works of Western art are sometimes beautiful; but I can say positively that I have had no experience of being carried away by them as by good old Japanese art. There is always something of effort and even pretence which are decidedly modern productions. I will say that it is at the best a borrowed art, not a thing inseparable from us. I ask myself why those artists of the Western school must be loyal to a pedantry of foreign origin as if they had the responsibility for its existence. It would be a blessing if we could free ourselves in some measure, through the virtue of Western art, from the world of stagnation in feeling and thought. I have often declared that it was the saviour of Oriental art, as the force of difference in element is important for rejuvenation. But what use is it to get another pedantry from the West in the place of the old one? I have thought more than once that our importation of foreign art is a flat failure. It may be that we must wait some one hundred

years at least before we can make it perfectly Japanised, just as we spent many years before thoroughly digesting Chinese art; but we have not a few pessimists who can prove that it is not altogether the same case. Although I have said that the foreign pedantry greatly troubles the Japanese work of Western art, I do not mean that it will create the same effect as upon Western artists. I am told the following story:

A year or two ago a certain Italian, who had doubtless a habit of buying pictures (with little of real taste in art, as is usually the case with a picture-buyer), went to see the art exhibition of the Taiheiyo Gakwai Club held at Uyeno Park, and bought many pictures on the spot, as he thought they were clever work of the Japanese school. Alas, the artists meant them to be oil paintings of the Western type! The Italian's stupidity is inexcusable; but did they indeed appear to him so different from his work at home? The saddest part is that they are so alien to our Japanese feeling in general; consequently they have little sympathy with the masses. It is far away yet for their work to become an art of general possession; it can be said it is not good art when it cannot at once enter into the heart. It is not right at all to condemn only the Western art in Japan, as any other thing of foreign origin is equally in the stage of mere trial. I often wonder about the real meaning of the modern civilisation

of Japan. Imitation is imitation, not the real thing at all.

There are many drawbacks, as I look upon the material side, to the Western art becoming popular; for instance, our Japanese house—frail, wooden, with the light which rushes in from all sides—never gives it an appropriate place to look its best. And the heaviness of its general atmosphere does not harmonise with the simplicity that pervades the Japanese household; it always appears out of place, like a chair before the *tokonoma*, a holy dais. Besides, the artists cannot afford to sell their pictures cheap, not because they are good work, but because there are only a few orders for them. I believe we must undertake the responsibility of making good artists; there is no wonder that there is only poor work since our understanding of Western art is little, and we hardly try to cultivate the Western taste. If we have no great art of the Western school, as is a fact, one half the whole blame is on our shoulders.

Here my mind dwells in more or less voluntary manner upon the contrast with the Japanese art, while I walk through the gallery of Western art of the Taiheiyo Gakwai Club of this year in Uyeno Park. There are exhibited more than two hundred, or perhaps three hundred pieces—quite an advance in numbers over any exhibition held before; but I am not ready to say how they stand

on their merit. I admit, at the outset, that the artists of the Western school have learned well how to make an arrangement no artist of the pure Japanese school ever dreamed to attain; and I will say that it is sometimes even subtle. But I have heard so much of the artistic purpose, which could be best expressed through the Western art. Are they not, on the other hand, too hasty and too direct to describe them? Some of their work most nakedly confesses their artistic inferiority to their own thought. What a poor and even vulgar handling of oil! I have no hesitation to say that there is something mistaken in their perception of realism. (Quite a number of artists in this exhibition make mistakes in this respect.) Indeed there is no word like realism (perhaps better to say naturalism) which, in Japan's present literature, has done such real harm; it was the Russian or French literature that taught us the meaning of vulgarity, and again the artists, some artists at least, received a lesson from these writers. It is never good to see pictures overstrained. Go to the true Japanese art to learn refinement. While I admit the art of some artist which has the detail of beauty, I must tell him that reality, even when true, is not the whole thing; he should learn the art of escaping from it. That art is, in my opinion, the greatest of all arts; without it, art will never bring us the eternal and the mysterious. If you could see some work

of Nakagawa or Ishii exhibited here, you would see my point, because they are somehow wrong for becoming good work, while they impress with line and colour. I spoke before of effort and pretence; such an example you will find in Hiroshi Yoshida's canvases, big or small, most of them being nature studies. (By the way, this Yoshida is the artist who exhibited two great canvases, called "Unknown," or "World of Cloud," painted doubtless from Fuji mountain, overlooking the clouds at one's feet, and "Keiryu," or "The Valley," at the Government exhibition with some success some years ago.) I am ready to admit that the artist has well brought out his purpose, but the true reality is not only the outside expression. His pictures are executed carefully; but what a forced art! This is the age when all Japanese artists, those of the Japanese school not excepted, are greatly cursed by objectivity. Some one has said that the Japanese dress, speaking of Japanese woman as a picture, does serve to make the distance greater. I thought in my reflection on art that so it is with the Japanese art. And again how near is Western art, at least the Japanese work of the Western school! Such a nearness to our feeling and mind, I think, is hardly the best quality of any art. I have ceased for some time to expect anything great or astonishing from Wada or Okada or even Kuroda; we most eagerly look forward to the sudden appear-

ance of some genius at once to frighten and hypnotise and charm us and make the Western art more intimate with our minds.

I amused myself thinking that it was Oscar Wilde who said that Nature imitates art; is not the nature of Japan imitating the poor work of the Western method? Art is, indeed, a most serious thing. It is the time now when we must jealously guard our spiritual insularity, and carefully sift the good and the bad, and protect ourselves from the Western influence which has affected us too much in spite of ourselves. Speaking of the Western art in Japan, I think I have spoken quite unconsciously of the general pain, not only in art, but in many other things, from which we wish we could escape.

After I have said all from my uncompromising thought, my mind, which is conscious to some extent of a responsibility for Japan's present condition in general, has suddenly toned down to thinking of the short history of Western art in Japan, that is less than fifty years. What could we do in such a short time? It may even be said that we did a miracle in art as in any other thing; I can count, in fact, many valuable lessons (suggestions too) from the Western art that we transplanted here originally from mere curiosity. Whether good or bad, it is firmly rooted in Japan's soil; we have only to wait for the advent of a master's hand for the real creation of great beauty.

It seems to me that at least the ground has been prepared.

Charles Wirgman, the special correspondent sent to the Far East from the *Illustrated London News*, might be called the father of Western art in Japan; he stayed at Yokohama till he died in 1891 in his fifty-seventh year. He was the first foreign teacher from whom many Japanese learned the Western method of art; Yoshiichi Takahashi was one of his students. Before Takahashi, Togai Kawakami was known for his foreign art in the early eighties; but it is not clear where he learned it. Yoshimatsu Goseda was also, besides Takahashi, a well-known student of Wirgman, and Shinkuro Kunizawa was the first artist who went to London in 1875 for art study, but he died soon after his return home in 1877 before he became a prominent figure in the art world.

When the Government engaged Antonio Fentanesi, an Italian artist of the Idealistic school, in 1876, as an instructor, the Western school of art had begun to establish itself even officially. This Italian artist is still to-day respected as a master. He was much regretted when he left Japan in 1878. Ferretti and San Giovanni, who were engaged after Fentanesi, did not make as great an impression as their predecessor. However, the time was unfortunate for art in general, as the country was thrown into disturbance by the civil war called the Saigo Rebellion. The popu-

larity which the Western art seemed to have attained had a great set-back when the pictures were excluded from the National Exhibition in 1890. But in the reaction the artists of the Western school gained more vigour and determination; Shotaro Koyama, Chu Asai, Kiyowo Kawamura, and others were well-known names in those days. Kiyoteru Kuroda and Keiichiro Kume, the beloved students of Raphael Collin, returned home when the China-Japan war was over; they brought back quite a different art from that with which we had been acquainted hitherto. And they led vigorously the artistic battle; the present popularity at least in appearance is owing to their persistence and industry. The Government again began to show a great interest in Western art; it sent Chu Asai and Yeisaku Wada to Paris to study foreign art. Not only these, many others sailed abroad privately or officially to no small advantage; you will find many Japanese students of art nowadays wherever you go in Europe or America.

We were colour-blind artistically before the importation of Western art, except these who had an interest in the so-called colour-print; but the colour-print was less valued among the intellectual class, as even to-day. Our artistic eye, which was only able to see everything flat, at once opened through the foreign art to the mysteries of perspective, and though they may not be

the real essence of art, they were at least a new thing for us. There are many other lessons we received from it; it seems to me that the best and greatest value is its own existence as a protest against the Japanese art. If the Japanese art of the old school has made any advance, as it has done, it should be thankful to the Western school; and at the same time the artists of foreign method must pay due respect to the former for its creation of the "Western Art Japonised." It may be far away yet, but such an art, if a combination of the East and West, is bound to come.

## APPENDIX I

## THE MEMORIAL EXHIBITION OF THE LATE HARA

THE memorial exhibition of Busho Hara, a Japanese artist of the Western school, held recently in Tokyo to raise a fund for his surviving family as one of its objects (Hara passed away in October, 1913, in his forty-seventh year), had many significances, one of which, certainly the strongest, was in contradiction of the general understanding that Western paintings will never sell in Japan; even a trifling sketch in which the artist only jotted down his momentary memory fetched the most unusual price. Hara is a remarkable example of one who created his own world (by that I mean at least the buyers, though not real appreciators) among his friends through his personality, which strengthened his work; paradoxically we shall say he was an artist well known and utterly unknown; and when I say he was an utterly unknown artist, I have my thought that he never even once exhibited his work to the public, and his often defiant spirit and high aim made him scorn and laugh over people's ignorance on art. How he hated the Japanese art world where real merit is no passport at all. But Hara's friends are pleased to know from this exhibition the fact that

even the public he ever so despised are not so unresponsive to his art, whose secret he learned in London.

Hara was, sad to say, also an artist whose Western art-work, like that of some other Japanese artists to whom quite an excellent credit was given in their European days, much declined or, better to say, missed somehow the artistic thrill since he left England in 1906. Why was that? what made him so? Was it from the fact that there is no gallery of Western art old or new in Japan where your work will only be belittled after you have received a good lesson there? or is it that our Japanese general public never have a high standard in the matter of art, especially of Western art? I think there are many reasons to say that the passive, even oppressive air of Japan, generally speaking, may have a perfectly disintegrating effect on an artist trained in the West; it would not be wholly wrong to declare that the real Western art founded on emotion and life cannot be executed in Japan. Hara made quite many portraits by commission since that 1906, some of which were brought out in this exhibition. As they are work more or less forced, we must go to his other works for his best, which he executed with mighty enthusiasm and faith under England's artistic blessing. He writes down in his diary, the reading of which was my special privilege, on January 2nd of 1905, the following words: "At last Port Arthur has fallen. When the war shall be done that will be the time for our battle of art against Europe to begin. Oh, what a great responsibility for Japanese artists!"

Hara made a student's obeisance toward Watts among the modern masters, whose influence will be

most distinctly seen in one of his pictures in this exhibition called "The Young Sorrow" (the owner of this picture is Mr. Takashi Matsuda, one of a few great art collectors in Japan), in which a young sitting nude woman shows only her beautiful back, her face being covered by her hands. What a sad, visionary, pale clarification in colour and tone! Hara writes down when his mind was saturated with Watts at Tate's or somewhere else: "What an indescribable sense of beauty! Art is indeed my only world and life. Again look at the pictures. How tender, how soft, and how warm in tone and atmosphere! And how deep is the shadow of the pictures! And that deep shadow is never dirty." Again he writes down on his visit to Tate's on a certain day: "It was wrong that I attempted to bring out all the colours from the beginning at once, and even tried to finish the work up by mending. There is no wonder my colours were dead things. We must have the living beauty and tone of colours; by that I do never mean showy. I must learn how to get the deep colour by light paint." While he was saturated with Watts, he on the other hand was copying Rembrandt at the National Gallery. Hara's copy of "The Jewish Merchant" is now owned by the Imperial Household in Tokyo. This copy and a few other copies of Rembrandt were in the exhibition. And Hara was a great admirer of Turner. Markino confesses in his book or books that it was Hara who first opened his spiritual eyes to Turner. At this memorial exhibition Turner is represented by Hara's copy of Venice. There was in the exhibition "The Old Seamstress," which I was

pleased to say was one of Hara's best pictures. Whenever I see Hara's pictures of any old woman, not only this "Old Seamstress," I think at once that what you might call his soul sympathy immediately responded to the old woman, since Hara's heart and soul were world-wearied and most tender.

Markino has somewhere in the book the following passages: "First few weeks I used to take him round the streets, and whenever we passed some picture shops he stopped to look through the shop window, and would not move on. I told him those nameless artists' work was not half so good as his own. But he always said: 'Oh, please don't say so. Perhaps my drawings are surer than those, and my compositions are better too. But the European artists know how to handle oils so skilfully. I learn great lessons from them.'"

Indeed when he returned home he had fully mastered the technique of handling oils from England, where he stayed some four years. It is really a pity that Hara passed away without having fully expressed his own art in his masterly technique, which he learned with such sacrifice and patience. His death occurred suddenly at the time when he was about to break away from his former self and to create his own new art ten times stronger, fresher, and more beautiful.

I wish to call the readers' attention to Yoshio Markino's *My Recollections and Reflections*, which contains the most sympathetic article on Busho Hara.

## APPENDIX II

## THE NERVOUS DEBILITY OF PRESENT JAPANESE ART

WHEN I say that I received almost no impression from the annual Government Exhibition of Japanese Art in the last five or six years, I have a sort of same feeling with the tired month of May when the season, in fact, having no strength left from the last glory of bloom (what a glorious old Japanese art !), still vainly attempts to look ambitious. Although it may sound unsympathetic, I must declare that the present Japanese art, speaking of it as a whole, with no reference to separate works or individual artists, suffers from nervous debility. Now, is it not the exact condition of the Japanese life at present ? Here it is the art following after the life of modern Japan, vain, shallow, imitative, and thoughtless, which makes us pessimistic ; the best possible course such an art can follow in the time of its nervous debility might be that of imitation.

* * * * *

When the present Japanese art tells something, I thank God, it is from its sad failure ; indeed, the present Japanese art is a lost art, since it explains nothing, alas, unlike the old art of idealistic exaltation, but the general condition of life. It is cast down from its high pedestal.

* * * * *

I do not know exactly what simplicity means, when

the word is used in connection with our old art; however, it is true we see a peculiar unity in it, which was cherished under the influence of India and China, and always helped to a classification and analysis of the means through which the artists worked. And the poverty of subjects was a strength for them; they valued workmanship, or the right use of material rather than the material itself; instead of style and design, the intellect and atmosphere. They thought the means to be the only path to Heaven. But it was before the Western art had invaded Japan; that art told them of the end of art, and laughed at the indecision of æsthetic judgment and uncertainty of realism of Japanese art. It said: "It is true that you have some scent, but it is already faded; you have refinement, but it is not quite true to nature and too far away." Indeed, it is almost sad one sees the artists troubled by the Western influence which they accepted, in spite of themselves; I can see in the exhibitions that many of them have long ago lost their faith by spiritual calamity, and it is seldom to see them able to readjust their own minds under such a mingled tempest of Oriental and Occidental. Is it not, after all, merely a waste of energy? And how true it is with all the other phenomena of the present life, their Oriental retreat and Occidental rush.

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The present Japanese art has sadly strayed from subjectivity, the only one citadel where the old Japanese art rose and fell; I wonder if it is not paying a too tremendous price only to gain a little objectivity of the West.

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